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INTRODUCTION.

JOHN.

CHIEF among modern commentaries are those of Westcott, Godet, and Reynolds, the last issued in the "Pulpit Commentary." Milligan and Moulton in "International Commentary" contribute a good exposition, while information on all critical questions can be had in Gloag's "Introduction to the Johannine Writings" and Watkins' Bampton Lecture, 1890. Of expository works on special parts may be mentioned Bersier's "Light of the World" (first ten chapters) and Maclaren's "Holy of Holies" (fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters). Important expository works on the whole book are Maurice, 1857, and M. Dods, Vol. I. in "Expositor's Bible, 1890"; and there are books by Dr. D. Thomas and Dr. Cynddylan Jones. Calthrop's "Preacher's Commentary" is poor, and there is no first-rate work on the Intercessory Prayer. Of school commentaries, Plummer in "Cambridge Bible" and Reith in "Bible Class Handbooks" are admirable.

ACTS.

The literature is very extensive, but very little of it homiletical. Old-fashioned books like Arnot's "Church in the House" and Eadie's "Paul the Preacher" are still worth

looking at. See also all the Lives of St. Paul. Among commentaries may be named those of Lord Arthur Hervey, H. B. Hackett, Lyman Abbot, P. J. Gloag, W. Denton (draws from mediæval sources), F. C. Cook (good). Mr. T. E. Page's short commentary is clever. Lumby, Lindsay, and Plumptre have also written short commentaries, and there is suggestiveness in Cynddylan Jones's studies. Prof. Stokes's work in the "Expositor's Bible" (Vol. I., 1891) is full of freshness, and deals with the subject from the point of view of an ecclesiastical historian.

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ST. JOHN IV.–XXI.

REFERENCES: iv. 1-15.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 47. iv. 1-30.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 136. iv. 1-42.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 320. iv. 2.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 279. iv. 4.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 15; J. D. Smith, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 393. iv. 4-26.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 324. iv. 6.—W. Poole Balfern, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 14; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 127; M. Dix, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 145. iv. 6, 7.—T. T. Munger, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 283.

Chap. iv., ver. 7.—"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink."

THE story of the woman of Samaria is the history of one whom Christ found a bitter ignorant sinner, and left a large-hearted, devoted missionary. It is the experience of a soul which Christ took in hand and treated by Himself. It was just the centre of the day's heat, when there came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, "Give Me to drink." It was all so very simple, so insignificant, so casual. And yet to what vast results did Christ bring out that ordinary circumstance.

Notice—I. That upon a thing so small, Christ built up the salvation, not of one only, but of many. It was the quick perception and holy use of an opportunity. Now here lies a great sin at the door—the neglect of opportunities of usefulness. They are laid at our feet everywhere, and if we had but taken them up, if we had only seen in common events the openings for influence, what a different thing would life have been, and what sad retrospects of wasted time and of useless existence might some of us have been spared this day.

II. The way Christ went to work was this. He began with what might be called a commonplace, but immediately He took it out of commonplace, and raised it to a truer tone and a higher level. That is a holy art which every follower of Christ in this world will do well to learn from his Master's lips. It

will be a true and good resolve to determine, "I will try to make conversation worthier of my own and others' being."

III. In His remark, Christ took the lower ground; He placed Himself as the one to receive. There is a beautiful lesson in the Lord of Life and Glory saying to a poor woman, "Give Me to drink." He wanted to open an avenue to that woman's heart, and He knew that the lower we stoop, and the more we put the other on the upper ground, the surer we are to have access to his soul. It is often a much more winning and endearing thing to receive something than it is to give something. If there is any one you wish to attack, let that person be kind to you. Ask and accept a favour; do it with an unselfish, consecrating motive. "Give Me to drink"—and see the result.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 165.

REFERENCES: iv. 7.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 99. iv. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 782; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 274; F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 115; D. Fraser, *The Metaphors of the Gospel*, p. 228; J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 38. iv. 11.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 130. iv. 11-14.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 94. iv. 13, 14.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 387. iv. 14.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 280; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 864; vol. xx., No. 1202. iv. 13, 14.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 193. iv. 14.—*Ibid.*, new series, vol. iii., p. 365.

Chap. iv., ver. 15.—**"The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."**

IT is evident that Christ's method with the Samaritan was first to awaken an interest, a desire, a consciousness—at first vague, but growing clearer and clearer—that there was a condition beyond her which, whether she had known it before or not, she really required to make her happy, and which, if she liked, she could attain. For be assured of this, that some measure of hope is essential to all true repentance and conversion.

I. There is a gift, there is a Giver—a gift for the Giver to give, and a Giver to give the gift. It might have been otherwise. The best part of the gift is that the Giver puts Himself into the gift. It is all free, all to be had for asking; and therefore, if any one is not happy, it is either because he does not know the gift or because he does not know the Giver.

II. The real fountain of a Christian's being is at the throne of God. It is a once-crucified, now-ascended Jesus, from

whom, in glory, flow all the life-streams. Into the man's inmost heart those life-streams from the wounds of the glorified Jesus run; and there, like some deep reservoir, that grace of God, in communication with Christ in the heavens, is treasured up; and thence, happy thoughts—holy, purifying thoughts; thoughts of strength and wisdom; thoughts of love and self-sacrifice and heaven; thoughts of Jesus, every drop redolent of its fountain, are always springing up in the man. The woman knew enough of all this to be aware, just aware, that there was something to which she was a stranger which Jesus had to give, and which would be far better to her than all she was now working and slaving for. And she said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Let us see how she stood. (1) She had lost, or at least she was losing, her confidence in her own resources. The well was no longer to her what it once was; she was thinking less, if she did not think meanly of it. (2) She was conscious of, and she was expecting and she was longing for what she was told, and what she believed, would be satisfying. (3) All she looked for she was looking for at the hand of Him who could give it.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 173.

REFERENCES: iv. 15.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 155; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 770.

Chap. iv., ver. 16.—"Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither."

WE little know what our own prayers involve. Should we pray them if we did? Here, too, the veil is drawn in mercy before the future. You ask for the waters of joy, and you have them; but the first drops of the waters of joy are the tears of penitence. The woman wished to drink of Christ's well, but she must first drink of her own sin. "Go, call thy husband, and come hither."

I. Notice, that it was just after He had awakened bright expectations of the future, that Christ at once sent her mind back into the past, and led her to retrace her sinful course. Prospects should precede retrospects.

II. How was sin fastened upon the woman's mind? Christ took it out of all generalities. He did not talk of the corruption of the human heart, but He sent one arrow straight home to its place in that heart. It is a very great thing to look upon Christ

not only as the healer, but as the detector, of sin. Is it not an equal part of the physician's work to detect as it is to heal a disease? Ask the Great Physician to do for you the same office which He did for the Samaritan woman. There is no hand which can do it like His—so faithfully, and yet so tenderly. Your own or another man's may be rough, His will be laid delicately; theirs may be partial, His will be true; theirs uncertain, His exact. Under that wise hand, immediately the woman began to show the two signs of a changed heart, she thought badly of herself and honouringly of Christ. At once there was an acknowledgment of guilt, "I have no husband;" and at once, too, Christ stood out to her in one of His greatest offices, "I perceive that Thou art a prophet." I do not suppose that she felt sin yet as she felt it afterwards, or that she saw in Christ all that she afterwards recognised in Him, but there was some confession of faith. It is well; the rest of the road to that woman will be much easier. If you have gone so far as ever to feel and confess one sin, and to honour one attribute of the Lord Jesus Christ, from that point you will be led on, like her, quickly.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 181.

REFERENCE: iv. 16.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 116.

Chap. iv., vers. 19-24.—"The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet," etc.

GOD is Spirit; worship in spirit.

I. Christ lived in another region than that of religious quarrel. To Him, both Judaism and Samaritanism were worn-out forms of truth, and He came to put them both aside and to lead men into a new world. But had He been like some of our modern prophets, who place themselves above religious disputes, He would not have thought it worth while to decide which of them had most truth, which of them *then* was worthiest. "Both are nothing to Me," He would have said; "leave them both alone and come and sit with Me." But Christ did not take that position. Though He lived in the loftiest region, at home with absolute truth, He could come down among the strifes of men about relative truth, and see on which side in the lower region the greatest amount of truth lay; He thought only of the cause of truth itself and of the advantage of mankind. He thought of the cause of truth, and He felt that it was of high importance that He should plainly say whether Jerusalem or Samaria were

the nearest to truth. And if we live with Him in a world above forms and opinions, churches and sects, we shall often have, if we wish to do any good, to follow Him in this. We must take trouble and say, Jerusalem is better than Samaria.

II. But there was a further answer to the woman's question. The woman had stated the whole question of religious strife, and we have discussed that part of Christ's reply which had to do with existing circumstances. Jerusalem was better than Samaria. But there was something better still—the higher spiritual life, in which the questions in dispute between Jerusalem and Samaria would wholly cease; the life in the spirit and in truth which should pass beyond Jerusalem as a place of worship, and everywhere worship God, in which the temple and altar were neither on Mount Moriah or Mount Gerizim, but set up in every faithful heart. And we, taking this new conception of His into our hearts, rise with Him into the higher region, where the woman's question seemed to have no meaning, where religious strife is dead, because God is worshipped as Spirit and known as Truth. To us God is everywhere, and we worship the Father most truly when we enter the realm of Infinite Love, where He abides beyond the strife of men.

S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 324.

REFERENCES: **iv. 20-29.**—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 250.

Chap. iv., ver. 21.—**"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."**

THE Ideal of Christian Worship.

I. In considering the ideal of Christian worship, look at the very evident symbolism of the Tabernacle and the Temple. There was the outer court for the general congregation. Here the sacrifice was actually offered. But it was in the Holy Place, within the first veil, into which only the priests might enter, that it was presented, while into the most Holy Place, within the second veil, the high priest alone entered once in each year, with the blood of the sacrifice of the great day of atonement. This inner holy of holies was symbolical of heaven, the place of the immediate presence of God.

II. From and after the completion of the work of Christ in His ascension and His gift at Pentecost, heaven and earth, spiritually, *i.e.*, in respect of spiritual privileges, became one. Access is

free, the barrier is removed. So in the ideal view, that is, the only worthy, the only adequate, the only real and scriptural view, of Christian worship, heaven and earth are one, their worship one. (1) This spiritual and inner identity of the worship of heaven and earth has from the first been, as matter of fact, distinctly affirmed by the Catholic Church, whether intentionally, after deliberation, or unconsciously, as it were, by a true spiritual instinct. (2) The next link of unity between the worship of the Church militant and that of the Church at peace within the veil—and this is a link far more deeply-underlying and essential—is the identity in the view of the one Intercessory action of the one High Priest. His action is not confined to heaven. Wherever His Church is, there is He her Head; and wherever He is, and pleads, He is a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec—at once the king and the priest of His city of righteousness and peace. And that this, His sacerdotal function—which needs must last throughout this dispensation, until, from within the veil, He shall appear on earth again the second time without sin unto salvation, that this His intercession might not be without its visible exhibition here below, He offered Himself in the upper chamber, and bade His apostles show forth His death for a perpetual memorial of Him.

CANON MEDD, *Oxford University Herald*, February 10th, 1883.

REFERENCES: iv. 22.—J. Clifford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 8. iv. 22-30.—W. Hay Aitken, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 401.

Chap. iv., ver. 23.—"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

THE Spirituality of Worship.

I. What is it to worship God in spirit and in truth? And why did the Father seek such to worship Him? In order to answer this question satisfactorily we must consider the nature of God, for in a subsequent verse our Lord describes this nature, and grounds on His description the necessity for such worship as is mentioned in the text, saying, God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. That Deity differs immeasurably from ourselves is a truth which lies at the foundation of all true religion; for it is impossible that we should entertain a due reverence for God, and yet invest Him in any degree with our own feebleness and imperfection. The scriptural representations of God as infinite as well

as omnipresent seem to require us to believe that God cannot have a body, but that God must be pure spirit. All acceptable worship of the Divine Being must take its character from the nature of that Being; otherwise it cannot be supposed that the worship will be agreeable to the Being, and obtain favour in His sight. If then the Father have revealed himself as a Spirit, it will necessarily follow that a carnal and ceremonial worship cannot be that in which He will delight; and you must be quite prepared, if you are seeking an account of what service will be acceptable to the Father, for such an admonition as that of the text.

II. We observe, next, of worship, that in rendering it we only render unto God that honour which He has a right to require at our hand. It is not optional whether or no we will worship God at all; for the creature stands in such relation to the Creator that, if worship is withheld, the Divine Being is defrauded, and wrath and punishment must inevitably follow. But if it be thus imperative upon us that we worship God, it must be equally imperative that we worship Him according to His nature. The worship which God requires is the homage of the soul, an act in which all the powers of the inner man earnestly combine; so that the understanding, and the will, and the affections are alike engaged in the service of the Lord. To worship God in spirit and in truth engages the understanding, with all its powers of embracing truth; and the will, with all its energies of choice and decision; and the affections, with their fervour and tenacity in the one work of acknowledging and embracing in the Lord God Almighty, the alone object whose wrath is really terrible, and whose favour is really valuable.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2614.

REFERENCES: iv. 23.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 54; J. Thain Davidson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 248; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 213. iv. 23, 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 695; A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, p. 9; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iv., p. 325.

Chap. iv., ver. 24.—"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

THE Worship of God, the Personal Spirit.

It is when we get into the midst of practical life, out of abstractions of thought, that we realize our need of a heavenly Father, that we turn to Christ as the revealer of that Divine and blessed truth. And of how we are led to do that I shall illustrate from

the cases of those whom I have already dwelt on as needing to conceive God as impersonal.

I. The idealist, who contemplates and worships God as Thought, and sees Him as essential Truth, Love, Justice, and Beauty, is satisfied with that idea as long as he can live apart in his study and separate himself from the strifes of the world. But when such a man, at some great crisis of human history, is thrilled with the excitement of humanity, and, going forth to take his part with men in fighting for freedom or his fatherland, or for any of those truths which are the saving ideas of mankind, finds himself one of a great company, all moving with one thought, all breathing the same passionate air; yet, though united, each having their own personal inner life, their own separate way of feeling the same emotion, their own especial worship in the words of their own heart, their own personal need of One on whom beyond man's help they may rely—think you that then his conception of a God who is infinite Intelligence, essential Love and Truth, impersonally conceived, will be sufficient? No; when Fichte, idealist of idealists, left the class-room as the drum went by, and marched with his soldiers to the War of Independence, he did not abandon his ideal conception of the great "I Am," whom he abstained in general from clothing with the attributes of personality; but he added to it the conception of a Father and Lover of men, who went with each of them hand in hand, as man with man to battle. In such hours the idealist worships the personal Fatherhood of God.

II. And the natural philosopher, one who loves and honours God as the living energy of the universe, and worships Him as such honestly and rightly, though he conceive Him as impersonal, when one of the great sorrows of life besets him, and the sorrow makes him feel the absolute personalty he himself has, and which he had almost lost in ceaseless contemplation of an absolute Force—does he then only see the Impersonal bending above him? Is not the passionate longing of his heart for One who can be his Father, a Friend—a human God to him, grasping his hand, and saying, "Be of good cheer, for I am thine, and those thou hast lost on earth are Mine for ever"? Many may resist these things, but they are there—vital, powerful, impassioned desires. Whence do they come? What do they say? They come from, and they tell us of, our need of the personalty of God.

III. How shall we worship God as the personal Father of the race in spirit and in truth? Why, in that truth, your life must

become a worship of love—spirit being that it is—of love of men, and God, because He loves men. Love of man is easy when we believe in that idea of God. We cannot help loving that which God loves so well; we cannot help being proud of our fellow-men, for are not all ennobled in His love? We cannot help loving that which is destined to be so beautiful; for we see men not as they are, but as they will be. We look not at the poor worm that crawls from birth to death, nor at the chrysalis that seems to die. We see the beautiful creature that is to be, the winged Psyche of humanity; and every soul grows precious as beauty in the vision. To hasten the coming of that day we put this spiritual love into a spiritual life of active righteousness.

S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 406.

IT was not an utterance unknown to the heathen world before the coming of Christ, that God was Spirit. The Greeks, the philosophic Hindus, the later Platonists of Alexandria, and many others in many nations had said it, and said it well. Then what was there new in it on the lips of Christ? How was He more remarkable when He said it than the teachers who had gone before him? It is a question often on the lips of the opponents of Christianity, and it arises from their ignorance of that which they oppose. For where do they find that Christ put Himself forward as giving especially new truths? A new method He did give; new commandments, new inferences from ancient truths. A new centre for them He did give; but He was far too profoundly convinced of the consistent and continuous development of religious truth to dream of creating anything absolutely new in truth.

I. Consider now the truth here taught, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." I approach one part of it, or God as a Spirit in all men, by dwelling on Christ's act in giving this truth to the Samaritan woman as a representative act. In giving it to her He gave to all in her state of intellect and heart. He proclaimed, in giving it to her, that it was not only for learned and civilised people, but for all people, however ignorant, savage, and poor; and if for all, then the spiritual life, or the indwelling of God, was possible to all. But if it was possible for all, it could only be so by a previous kinship between all human spirits and God the source of spirit. To give it to all was, then, to proclaim that God as Spirit moved in all.

II. Believing this, what should be the result on our life? We should (1) ourselves worship God in this truth, and (2) in its spirit live among men. For ourselves, to worship God in this truth is to live one's whole spiritual life in it and by it, believing that God is in it. We may have been reckless, godless, because we heard our nature pronounced to be corrupt in all its ways; we now turn with a thrill of joy and recognise, led by the light of a new faith, the very Spirit of God in us—speaking, living, impelling, working with us for our perfection. Secondly, worship God not only in yourselves in this truth, but live in it and in its spirit among men, and your outward life will then be it—worship of God in spirit and truth.

S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 339.

I. CONSIDER what we mean when we say "God is Spirit." We mean by it that He is the essential Being of all those things invisible, immaterial, impossible for ever to be subjected to the senses, which we therefore call spiritual ideas, such as truth, love, righteousness, wisdom; and that He is their source in us, or rather their very Being in us, that in having them we have God. Take any one of these ideas—trace it through its various forms at different times, under different circumstances; it will always preserve certain external elements that will enable you to collect all its forms into one expression—truth, or justice, or love. The natural philosopher does similar kind of work when he collects all the phenomena which belong to any one form of force, and unites them under one expression—heat, light, or electricity. And just as he finally takes all these separate forces, and, seeing that they are correlated and pass into one another, declares that they are different modes of one constant force—that they are all motion, dynamic or potential—that the source of their motion is always one and the same; so do we, contemplating the spiritual ideas, and knowing that they are spiritual forces, recognise that they are correlated and interchangeable—that Truth is Justice, and Justice Love—and finally reach the conception that there is one spiritual force of which all these are but modes—the force of the spiritual will. That is God—God as Spirit. God is Truth, Love, Justice, Purity, and the rest; and all these are one in Him.

II. We are to worship these ideas as God, in spirit and in truth; to give a life reverence and devotion to them; to be true in every thought, word, and deed; to be pure in the deepest centre of our being; to be loving as Christ was loving, in our

national, social, and private life; to be just in thought in our relations with men, in behalf of the weak against the oppressor. To do these things is to worship God. (1) First, then, we must do this worship in spirit. To worship in spirit in this case is to have perfect freedom in the matter of forms for our ideas, keeping our love for the ideas as the first thing. If that is the case—if we love these ideas of God—then the life which is in love will freely make its own form—first for the thoughts, secondly for their worship—as best suits its needs; worshipping now in the church, now on the lake or in the crowded street; now praying as we walk, now kneeling to pray; now keeping a Sabbath, now abstaining; now following no observances, now sedulously keeping them up—exactly as we feel that the Divine spiritual life in us needs expression. Always at perfect freedom, always in the spirit, because, through the ever-felt presence of God, all times, all places, all things are holy unto us. (2) Secondly, the worship of spiritual ideas must be in truth. Christ used that phrase in opposition to a worship of them through doctrines, opinions, creeds, confessions, and the like things which veil the truth. To be able to live spirit to spirit, heart to heart, without any need of formulating, in intellectual propositions, the ideas that appeal to the heart—that would be the highest life. To worship in truth is to care more for truth than creeds; to harmonise our spiritual life and thought, not with doctrinal symbols, but with the very light and truth of Divine ideas; to hold oneself free to take from all religions and forms of faith thoughts which may extend the range of our ideas, and give us a greater and nobler view of God;—in one word, to keep ourselves in the worship of the living things themselves that are in the spirit, and not of their intellectual forms that are in the letter. This it is to worship God as Spirit in truth. S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 354.

GOD in Spirit: Personal and Impersonal.

I. To represent God as the essential Truth, Love, and Righteousness is to give, so far as it goes, a just idea of Him. But it would be, taken alone, a wholly inadequate idea. We should have to connect with it the ideas which we possess of absolute Being, of Absolute Power and Knowledge, of Infinity and Eternity. But these are also spiritual ideas; and even when they are added, the idea of God still remains inadequate *for us*, because it can be still conceived as apart from the Personal Man. If we were pure intellect or pure spirit, the conception

of God as absolute Truth, or absolute Knowledge, might be sufficient for us; we might then, abiding in truth or knowledge, conceive of them as perfect and infinite, and call the conception God. But we are not pure intellect or spirit: we are limited on every side of our nature, and in realizing our limitations we find ourselves possessed of that which we call Personality. Having an intense conviction of personality, we find, when we come to conceive of God, that it is one of the strongest tendencies of our thought to bestow on our idea of Him a personality similar in kind to our own. We impute to Him will, character, affections, self-consciousness. We make Him a Person; we say, He is, and knows that He is. He wills, thinks, and makes will and thought into form and action.

II. Again, supposing the reality of God and that we are His offspring. It stands to reason that He would wish to give some tidings of His nature to us. He would then give a revelation of Himself, as we were able to receive it. And we should say, *à priori*, arguing from our wants and our nature, that such a revelation ought to be a personal one. And it is so from beginning to end—revelation assumes that we want a personal God, and satisfies that want. As revelation went on, the idea of God as a personal God was expanded and strengthened. In elder times He had not been brought very near, as a Person, to the heart of man. That work was fulfilled by Christ. He called God our Father, and the word established the Christian idea of God, as a Being who has personal relations and dealings with us, as a father has with a son; and in thus likening Him to us in the common round of our affections, it made the whole conception of God's personality infinitely stronger.

III. When the notion of God's personality was strengthened in Christianity, even then (though it was combined with the other thought that He was Spirit) the human personal element became too strong, and often extinguished the other. There are two results which follow. (1) God is less and less conceived as the spiritual essence of Truth and Love and Justice, and the purity of our conception of these spiritual ideas in Him is violated at every step by this exaggerated dwelling on His personality. (2) The idea of God as an all-pervading life in mind and in nature, an idea which goes with the conception of Him as Spirit, fades away also, and is replaced by a vast Personality outside of man, not in every man; outside of nature, and leaving it to the action of blind laws, not in nature as its living spirit. Because God had been conceived of as too personal, men drifted

into conceiving Him as impersonal. But it chiefly arose out of man's necessity for such a conception. And here we answer the question whether it is enough for our wants to conceive of God as personal? I answer that it is not, and that the theory of Pantheism ought to be taken up into our idea of God. The conception of God must share in the personal and the impersonal; Pantheism is true, but not true by itself. Personal Theism is true, but not by itself. It is only when they are both rolled together and both brought into our idea of God, that they lose their several evils, and that we possess an adequate conception of His nature, fitted for the whole of our lives, fitted for the different characters of men.

S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 372.

THE Worship of the Impersonal Spirit.

I. The man who possesses that poetic feeling for beauty in nature, and that intense sense of a life in nature, which, combined without the formative power, cause him the same pleasure as the artist has—what is his state of mind when he looks, in the stillness of the hills, or lost in some woodland, or by the solitary banks of the sea, upon the infinite beauty of the world? He feels a thrill of emotion so intense that he forgets the whole of his life, and is lost in the moment in which he lives. Having lost the consciousness of his personality, there is nothing that touches him from that landscape that he does not become, and become in ceaseless change of his indwelling. He has become impersonal. Now if the man be religious, or wishes to worship, is it possible for him to connect a personal God with that? He has himself lost for the time that sharp self-consciousness which leads him at other times to claim and need a personal Father in heaven. He cannot worship a personal God as long as he feels thus, and no modern poet when speaking of nature can make God in it personal to his feeling. Now what these men feel is precisely that which, modified by different capacities for emotional pleasure in beauty, and for emotional perception of life, all men who have anything of the artist character feel in contact with nature. We cling with all the power of men who are utterly desolate without it to the idea of God as personal Fatherhood when we live in our own hearts or in those of our fellowmen; but when we live alone with nature, and humanity has died out of our field of thought and feeling, we cling equally to the idea I have given above—to the infinite impersonality of God.

II. Now, what is the true and spiritual worship of God, as impersonal, in the work of art and science when they are at work on nature? In the first it is this—adding to our conception of God the thoughts of unlimited life, beauty, and harmony—to adore these in nature as the all-pervading God, with all the life, sense of beauty, truth, and melody of nature that we ourselves possess. It is to see in all things universal love as their living but not necessarily self-conscious essence, and to love it in them with all our strength of emotion, and to hold, and rejoice in holding, that in doing so we are worshipping God in spirit. (2) As the natural philosopher looks at nature he becomes face to face at last with Force alone, active or latent, and the characteristic of it is intense impersonality. What is this force? Say it is only motion in matter, and the philosopher has no God, or only a God divided from the universe—a conception becoming more and more impossible in our present stage of thought. But let him say that matter is nothing but Force—a perfectly legitimate theory in natural science—and he may answer the question, What is Force? in a way which will enable him to find God in the universe. He may say that force is really will, active as thought, a universal will, a will free, resembling that which we possess, but which in us is limited by the bounds which constitute our personality. Remove those bounds of which he is conscious, abstract from it the confining elements of personality, and he has the conception of an infinite omnipotent will in which he may find God as He manifests Himself in nature. He will not find the impersonal God whom we worship as personal, but an impersonal God seen in Force as Will, in Action as Thought. It is, indeed, not matter, but spirit, that he touches, and his worship is the worship of a spiritual life, conceived of an ever-acting will.

S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 391.

THIS text gives us the sum of the whole matter; the grand principle of all true worship. The law of acceptable Christian worship is briefly this: that it must be the worship of the heart. The text leaves to men, in the exercise of the faculties God has given them, and through experience of the working of their own minds and of the minds of others, to find out what kind of worship is likeliest to be so. It does not follow, of necessity, that a very simple worship is to be the most spiritual and hearty. To some minds it may be so, while others may find that it is easier to worship in spirit and in truth with the help of a stately

worship and a noble church. And each, as before God, must find what suits him best. Outward variations in form are of infinitely little importance, if only the soul as before God is worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

I. And yet, looking to the whole teaching of Holy Scripture, and weighing the matter in our own best judgment, we may, perhaps, arrive at certain principles for our guidance as to the external circumstances most favourable to true and spiritual worship. Probably all intelligent Christian people would be agreed to go as far as this: that we are doing only what is right when we remove, as far as we can, all distracting circumstances, all outward hindrances to spiritual worship. Little outward annoyances, notwithstanding the most earnest prayer for the presence of the Blessed Spirit, may greatly abate spiritual enjoyment, and neglect of external decency and order is to very many a great hindrance in the way of worshipping in spirit and in truth. Surely then it may be accepted as certain, that it is fair and right to carefully remove whatever may hinder and distract us in our worship of God.

II. How can we think on the question of helps in worship? The enjoyment of noble architecture and music is not worship, and may be mistaken for it. The rest which falls on us, walking the aisles of a church of eight hundred years, the thrill of nerves and heart as the glorious praise begins, whose echoes fall amid fretted vaults and clustered shafts,—all that feeling, solemn as it is, has no necessary connection with worshipping God in spirit and in truth. On this question of aids in devotion I can say no further than that each Christian must, as before God, judge for himself. Only remember, that here you are on dangerous ground. You may fancy you are worshipping in spirit and in truth when you are doing no more than enjoying a sentimental excitement, fruitless and unprofitable.

A. K. H. B., *From a Quiet Place*, p. 73.

REFERENCES: iv. 24.—A. P. Stanley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 129; *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 82; W. G. Horder, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxi., p. 131; J. M. Wilson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 124; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 18; S. Clarke, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 163; *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 37; *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 156.

Chap. iv., ver. 25.—**"The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when He is come, He will tell us all things."**

CHRIST our Prophet. Christ came in one portion of His threefold office to be a teacher and a speaker forth to us of the will

of God. As, on the one hand, those are deeply in error who limit His office to this portion of it, and omit to dwell on His High-priesthood and His Kingship, so on the other hand it would be an error equally fatal to the entering into and realizing His redemption to forget those other essentials of His office, this His great work of teaching. Consider Him as our Prophet—our teacher sent from God; enquiring into His practice and the peculiar characteristics of that He is teaching.

I. His teaching was earnest and continuous. The power of His anointing ever abode upon Him, ever wrought in Him, and spoke forth from Him. "He taught them there," is the constant record of the Evangelists. The Lord wrought at His appointed work while it was day with Him, and He filled the day with His work. It was no accident of His course, but its very purpose and substance.

II. It was a powerful teaching. They were astonished at His doctrine, but He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. No man could withstand the power and wisdom with which He spake.

III. It was a spiritual teaching: a teaching not bound down to the exposition of the law or prophets as they stood, but designed to fill them out, to clothe their dead and bare forms with life and sinews, and to establish them where they never were planted before—in the hearts and lives of men.

IV. Again, His teaching was popular teaching. We are told that the common people heard Him gladly. His teaching went straight to the heart and laid open the life. Hence it was that it moved and convinced the hearers.

V. It was bold and unflinching. In what burning words did He unmask the decent sanctity of the scribes and Pharisees, who were even then conspiring to kill Him!

VI. His teaching again is full of the most varied and profound wisdom.

VII. It is supernatural, and above the power and grasp, as it is also above the character, of all human teachers.

VIII. It is prophetic.

IX. It bears witness of the Father.

H. ALFORD, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 126.

REFERENCE: iv. 25, 26.—J. Kelly, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 120.

Chap. iv., ver. 26.—**"Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He.**

I. THE woman at the well, feeling about for light, was led to her own Scriptures, and in those Scriptures to a prophecy—a

prophecy of a great Teacher who was to come—the Messias. The coming Teacher, she knew, would solve all her difficulties, and make her way quite clear. It is very beautiful, very comforting, very teaching, to watch this poor, earnest, baffled woman's soul, gathering itself at last till it centres upon Christ. She was in a great strait; where was the escape? Messias comes; He makes all things right. As the key fits into the lock, as the light matches to the eye, or as sweet music to the ear, so Christ is made for the soul, and the soul is made for Christ. Till nature has that filling it must be incomplete, and life must be restless till it settles on that one resting-place; and this that thirsting, confessing, enquiring mind was finding out, when God took her by the hand and led her, and put it into her heart to feel, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will teach us all things."

II. It is a safe thing to affirm that, wherever there is a desire for Christ in the heart, Christ Himself is not far from that desire. For of this you may be assured—Christ is always nearer to you than you think. Though you do not know it, the voices of your soul are all echoes. They are the responses to other voices, which are speaking to you. Had not Jesus first talked with you, there would never have been any of those things in your mind. All along, He who is to make the answer woke the question. He is there. You have been conversing with the very object that you are seeking; and that Presence it is which has aroused the feeling which now affects you. "I that speak unto thee am He." Patiently, very patiently, by a thousand tongues, God is always conversing with us; but rare is the heart to hear it. And happy is the man who, in the poetry of nature, in the arguments of fact, in the eloquence of truth, always catches the same accent, "I that speak unto thee am He."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 197.

REFERENCES: iv. 27.—J. Pulsford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 388; L. Abbott, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 98; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 253. iv. 27-30.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1678. iv. 28, 29.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 416. iv. 29.—G. W. Conder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 341; W. V. Robinson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 66. iv. 31-34.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. xvi., p. 300. iv. 31-38.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1901. iv. 34; *Ibid.*, vol. vi., No. 302. iv. 34-37.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 361. iv. 35.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 706; I. de Witt Talmage, *Old Wells Dug Out*, p. 294; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 32. iv. 35, 36.—R. Rainy, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 248. iv. 37.—R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 1. iv. 35-38.

—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 169. iv. 37, 38.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 73; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 114. iv. 38.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 234; *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 111. iv. 39.—*Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 211. iv. 39.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 158. iv. 39-42.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1053. iv. 42.—J. Vaughan, *Ibid.*, Nov. 12th, 1862; R. Duckworth, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 166. iv. 46.—G. Littlemore, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 170. iv. 46-53.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1865. iv. 46-54. —*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 467; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 24.

Chap. iv., ver. 48.—"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

FAITH without Demonstration. (Trinity Sunday.)

A few words will make it evident that men are unreasonable and inconsistent in refusing to believe the creed before they see the Scripture proof.

I. I would ask, in the first place, whether we reason and prove, before we act, in the affairs of this life? In ordinary legal matters, for instance, a man thinks it safe to go by the opinion of men in general; in extraordinary, he consults men learned in the law, feeling too vividly how much is at stake to trust himself. He cannot afford, in such a case, to indulge his love of argument, disputation, and criticism. No; this love of argument can only be indulged in a case in which we have no fears. It is reserved for religious subjects. Surely the general opinion of all men around us—and that from the first—the belief of our teachers, friends, and superiors, and of all Christians in all times and places, that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity must be held in order to salvation, is as good a reason for our believing it ourselves, even without being able to prove it in all its parts from Scripture, as the general belief how the law stands, and the opinion of skilful lawyers about the law, is a reason for following their view of the law, though we cannot verify that view from law books.

II. But it may be said that the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity is mysterious and unlikely. Now, I consider that this mysterious view is, as far as it proves anything, a recommendation of the doctrine. I do not say that it is true because it is mysterious, but that, if it be true, it cannot help being mysterious. It would be strange indeed if any doctrine concerning God's infinite and eternal nature were not mysterious. Let us learn from this festival to walk by faith. A subtle infidel might soon perplex any one of us. Of course he might.

Our state and warfare is one of faith. Let us aim at, let us reach after, and (as it were) catch at the things of the next world. There is a voice within us which assures us that there is something higher than earth. We cannot analyse, define, contemplate what it is that thus whispers to us. It has no shape or material form. There is that in our hearts which prompts us to religion, and which condemns and chastises sin. And this yearning of our nature is met and sustained, it finds an object to rest upon, when it hears of the existence of an all-powerful, all-gracious Creator. It incites us to a noble faith in what we cannot see. Let us exercise a similar faith as regards the mysteries of revelation also.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 327.

REFERENCES: iv. 48.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 248; T. Bonney, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 243; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 317; J. Keble, *Sermons for Sundays after Trinity*, Part II., p. 278; F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 128. iv. 48-50.—C. Kingsley, *Westminster Sermons*, p. 241.

Chap. iv., ver. 50.—**"And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way."**

TAKING God at His word.

When I say that we ought to take God at His word, I assert the most evident of truths, and I appear to be laying down the easiest of rules. But practically, I believe, none is harder; certainly there is no rule so little kept.

I. Between man and man the social law of faith is so strict that, if you do not believe what a man says, you are held to commit the greatest wrong that you can inflict upon him. It is wonderful how everyone accepts his fellow-creature's word. It is the basis of all civil transactions. Take away that confidence, and society itself must break up. At this moment there is nothing which most of us would resent so keenly as the shadow of an imputation upon the credit of his word. And has not the true God the same sense of jealousy for His own truthfulness, and the same indignant feeling of wrong and outrage when His word is questioned? Do you wonder that unbelief is placed among the most heinous of sins?

II. Note one or two ways by which we may cultivate that blessed art, that deep secret, of taking God at His word. (1) First, you must go back to the simplicities of childhood. It is the characteristic of a little child that it trusts. And if its

confidence has never been abused, and its habit of faith never rudely violated, a very little child takes everybody at his word; it sees everywhere the reflection of its own transparency. It is the prerogative of physical and of spiritual childhood to believe. (2) You must take honouring views of what God's word is. There is not a word which God ever spoke to you, but all the attributes of God went to make that word. Make experiments every day with God's word. Every experiment you make upon a promise will confirm its truth and power; and experiments daily repeated will soon become the habit of taking God at His word. (3) But, far more than all, you must acquaint yourself with the Speaker. You must know, before you can know the word, the heart that speaks it—you must know the heart of Jesus. How shall we trust the word, if we do not trust the Speaker?

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1868, p. 165.

REFERENCES: iv. 50.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 32. iv. 54.—W. Milligan, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 268. iv.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 248. v. 1.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. viii., p. 390; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1211. v. 1-9.—*Ibid.*, vol. xiii., No. 744; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 144. v. 1-16.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 209. v. 1-18.—*Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 154; A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 88.

Chap. v., vers. 2, 3.—"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches," etc.

SCRIPTURE a Record of Human Sorrow.

I. There lay about the Pool of Bethesda a great multitude of impotent folk—of blind, halt, and withered. This is a painful picture, such as we do not like to dwell upon—a picture of a chief kind of human suffering, bodily disease; one which suggests to us and typifies all other suffering—the most obvious fulfilment of that curse which Adam's fall brought upon his descendants. Now it must strike everyone who thinks about it that the Bible is full of such descriptions of human misery. Little does it say concerning the innocent pleasures of life; of those temporal blessings which rest upon our worldly occupations and make them easy; of the blessing which we derive from the sun and moon and the everlasting hills; from the succession of the seasons and the produce of the earth; little about our recreations and our daily domestic comforts; little about the ordinary occasions of festivity and mirth which occur

in life, and nothing at all about those various other enjoyments which it would be going too much into detail to mention. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity; man is born to trouble; these are its customary lessons.

II. God does nothing without some wise and good reason, which it becomes us devoutly to accept and use. In truth, this view is the ultimate true view of human life. But this is not all; it is a view which it concerns us much to know. It concerns us much to be told that this world is, after all, in spite of first experiences and partial exceptions, a dark world; else we shall be obliged to learn it—sooner or later we must learn it—by sad experience; whereas, if we are forewarned, we shall unlearn false notions of its excellence, and be saved the disappointment which follows them. By being told of the world's vanity at first, we shall learn, not indeed to be gloomy and discontented, but to bear a sober and calm heart under a smiling, cheerful countenance. The great rule of our conduct is to take things as they come. The true Christian rejoices in those earthly things which give joy, but in such a way as not to care for them when they go. For no blessing does he care much, except those which are immortal, knowing that he shall receive all such again in the world to come. But the least and the most fleeting he is too religious to contemn, considering them God's gift; and the least and most fleeting, thus received, yield a purer and deeper, though a less tumultuous joy.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 325.

REFERENCES: v. 2.—A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 273. v. 3, 4.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vii., p. 194; H. Wace, *Ibid.*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 197. v. 4.—G. Colborne, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 360; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 242; vol. viii., p. 202. v. 5-14.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 203. v. 6.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 112.

Chap. v., vers. 6, 7.—"When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me in the pool," etc.

CONSIDER whether, over and above the general typical features which we may detect in this miracle, there be not significative circumstances in the history from which, as Christians, we may draw great practical lessons.

I. Observe, that it was only at certain seasons that the angel descended, and only the individual that was instantly on the

alert, to take advantage of the troubling of the waters, that was healed of his infirmities. The waters were not at all times equally efficacious, and the dilatory, by letting slip an opportunity, ran no inconsiderable risk of remaining uncured up to the day of their death. Now, we do not mean to say that there is any moment at which men can turn in repentance to God and find Him unwilling to receive them. I do not mean to say of the Fountain open for sin and uncleanness that, like the Pool of Bethesda, it is healing only at certain times, and loses its power when stated solemnities have passed. But, nevertheless, there are precious opportunities in every man's life, turning-points as we may well call them, on the taking advantage of which may altogether depend his final salvation. So far as we ourselves are individually concerned, the troubling of the waters is an occasional, rather than a permanent, thing. The point to be observed is, that if we be not on the watch for that troubling of the waters, and if we do not, as soon as it takes place, endeavour to avail ourselves of these motions, we are likely to die in the porches of Bethesda, with the sickness of the soul altogether unrelieved.

II. The lesson comes out clear and distinct, that in religion everything depends on taking immediate advantage of the suggestions and emotions of God's Spirit, seeing that the visitations of grace are only occasional, and there is no pledge that a neglected opportunity will ever be followed by another. There is something singular in the question which Christ proposed to the cripple: "Wilt thou be made whole?" You may possibly decide against being cured. It is a secret unwillingness which frustrates the ordinance of grace, and keeps our Bethesda still crowded with the halt, the withered, and the blind. H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3251.

REFERENCES: v. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 955. v. 6. —W. G. Horder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 380; J. Williamson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 196; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. xiv., p. 302; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 307. v. 8.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 128. v. 9.—*Ibid.*, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 133; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 258. v. 10-20.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 374.

Chap. v., ver. 11.—"He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk."

THE authority for our life.

I. The principle contained in these words of the healed man is a grand and far-reaching principle. When truly interpreted,

it applies to the whole life of every saved man. He that saves the soul has a right to command and govern the life.

II. The motive—I mean gratitude—is the purest, the deepest, the strongest, the most constraining, the most abiding of all the motives which a Christian man can feel. There is nothing which it cannot impel us to do, nothing that it cannot enable us to sacrifice, nothing that is cannot strengthen us to bear; and if this ever dies within a man, all that is distinctively Christian dies with it.

III. It is a glorious thing to remember that whatever He commands us to do is *right.* Having assured ourselves that it is His command, then the obedience should be prompt—as prompt as was the obedience of the healed man, who at once "arose, and took up his bed, and walked."

E. MELLOR, *In the Footsteps of Heroes*, p. 17.

REFERENCES: v. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1479. **v. 13.**—*Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 129.

Chap. v., ver. 14.—**"Jesus findeth him in the temple, and saith unto him, Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come to thee."**

I. WE feel interested in hearing that the impotent man was restored to health, and yet, what was the benefit he received? He lived a few years, and then he died. What is life? Holy Scripture saith, "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Therefore, observes St. Augustine, in his comment on this miracle, "In that health was restored to this man's body for a time, some duration was added to a vapour; so then, this is not to be valued much, for vain is the health of man." The health of the soul is the thing to be thought of, for the soul endureth for ever; and the miracles effected by our blessed Lord on the bodies of men were only types of those greater miracles which, throughout the last dispensation, He works by His Spirit on the souls of men, in their regeneration, renovation, and sanctification.

II. What is our exhortation to those who have come to the Lord and are cleansed through the living stream—the spiritual Bethesda? We do not tell them to take their ease and be at rest. Our Sabbath is not here; it is an eternal one in the heavens. The threescore and ten short years, which is our appointed time on earth, are our working days. And we would send every one away from our Bethesda with the injunction,

"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." We would say, Go and serve God by doing the duties of your calling, whatever they may be. Dare bravely to be singular in the cause of Him who died to save you. To be singular, in order to attract notice to yourself, is indeed folly, and it may be a sin; but to be singular in rendering obedience to the word of the Lord, as speaking to you through the precepts of Scripture and the injunctions of your Church—this is the part of godliness. Let your answers to all gainsayers be the same in principle as his was who replied to the cavilling Jews, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk; such a Benefactor I cannot distrust; and such a Benefactor I will, by God's help, in all things strive to obey."

W. F. HOOK, *Sermons on the Miracles*, vol. i., p. 121.

CHRISTIAN fear of relapse into sin.

I. Consider what awful notions our Saviour would here impress on us concerning the future end and sore punishment of sin. Do so no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. From what we read of the sufferings of him to whom this was said, it is plain with what peculiar force the expression would come home to him. "A worse thing:" worse, that is, than a palsy of eight-and-thirty years. Suppose the man never so thoughtless and ignorant, such a threat would naturally fill him with alarm. Coming as it did from One who had just before clearly shown His almighty power! it would set him upon meditating, more seriously than ever he had done, upon the infinite danger of offending God, and the absolute necessity of amending his ways.

II. Where the caution of our Lord is slighted, and the evil habit of a man, suspended only by the affliction, returns and grows over the man anew, or he falls into fresh transgressions, that man's case is worse in many respects than if he had never been visited at all. (1) First, his wickedness is greatly aggravated by his ingratitute for God's especial mercies. (2) As such a case is very bad in itself, so it has the worst possible effect. It sears and deadens the heart and conscience, rendering it more and more difficult for any good advice, either of God or man, to find its way into our thoughts. The evil spirit knows his advantage, and presses it, of course, more and more earnestly, with sullen thoughts of the hardship of Christian obedience. While the evil spirit is thus gaining strength, the good Spirit of God is gradually so grieved and vexed that He begins entirely

to depart from those who will not listen to His gracious admonitions. And when God leaves a sinner to himself, we know too well what must follow. To all, therefore, who have been made whole by baptism, and not to those only who have been favoured with any signal temporal mercy, the Son of God here gives counsel, that they should make it very much their care to keep up a tender sense of the great things which have been done for them, the wretchedness from which they have been redeemed, and the continual danger of a relapse. It is in vain to think of continuing religious and improving in goodness as a matter of course; your heart must be steadfastly set upon that great blessing, and resolved to obey the good rules, by which only the Holy Spirit has taught us to obtain it.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. i., p. 88.

REFERENCES: v. 14.—J. M. Charlton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 19. v. 15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 282. v. 16-18.—F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 141.

Chap. v., ver. 17.—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

I DO not think there is a better characteristic of the more earnest thinking of these days than its profound reverence for faithful work; its profound sense that if a man have found his work he has found his felicity. In the text we have our Lord's own example, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." We are not able to understand much concerning God; but we are perfectly sure of this, that week-day or sabbath-day He is never idle. He does not abide in remote glory, hearkening to the praises of heaven. We think of Him as with the keen eye that misses not a movement of a being in nature; with the sharp ear that loses not a sound; with the unwearying hand that has wrought on from eternity and will work on to eternity. The Being who has set every man his work does not shrink from His own. And if He has appointed man's lot to be a laborious one, He bids His creature do no other than He does Himself. He does not say, Go; He says, Come.

I. God works in creation. When our bewildered mind owns its utter incapacity to grasp the millionth part of the awful sum that we name so easily when we say the universe, then remember that One Mind planned it all, and One Hand fashioned it; that all this, with its infinite relations and adaptations, of which science is daily telling us more, is God's work; and think what

commentary it reads on my text—"My Father worketh hitherto."

II. God works in Providence. It is fresh this day. It is sustaining each of us at this moment. The universe is not like a machine that just needed to be wound up once and then it could go by itself. It was not enough to launch a world on its orbit and then leave it alone; its course must be steered and prescribed, as it rolls on its way. To think that everything that is high and low, in earth, and air, and sea, is considered by God's eye, is tended by God's hand—what a comment on the Creator and Redeemer's declaration, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

III. God works in Redemption. What work on God's part is implied in man's Redemption! All the persons of the Godhead are tasked here. The Father so loved us as to send the Son; the Son came and lived and died; the Blessed Spirit must now apply the Gospel remedy to the refractory and repellent soul. Truly, in the case of each separate soul brought into the fold of the Good Shepherd, you may see a repetition of the work that was done in the creation, that is done in the Providence of the outer world. A. K. H. B., *From a Quiet Place*, p. 225.

REFERENCES: v. 17.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 14; A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 233. v. 19.—C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 331. v. 21-23.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 484. v. 23.—H. Bonar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 163; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 49. v. 22-23.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 18.

Chap. v., ver. 24.—**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation."**

THERE are two things here which at once stand out to the mind with equal prominence—the smallness of the conditions and the magnificence of the offer. The salvation of a man's soul is simply a matter of capitulation. All that God requires of His creatures, who have become by sin first rebellious and then hostile, is surrender—absolute, unqualified surrender. The terms of this capitulation are simply two—hear the messenger and believe the mission. The proffered result is instant security of life—that life infinitely prolonged, and no punishment.

I. This life which Christ offers to every man is a present possession; it is a fact. The moment that you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ you live, and there is no more death. The elements of death are taken away. You did die with Christ

upon the Cross, as a member of His mystical body. Now you as essentially live with Christ; therefore, there is no more death for ever and ever.

II. Secondly, this life lasts. In that life which you have had to do with, and which you used to live before you became a Christian, there was nothing very lasting; either the thing itself passed away, or the zest of it went, or your power to enjoy it ceased. In this life nothing perishes, because it draws out of the infinite; it is a life with hidden springs in God, and therefore there is eternity in it all.

III. There is nothing now behind; there is no condemnation to you; there is nothing hanging over your head; no future to be afraid of, for your sins have already been condemned and punished in Crist. Being in Him, and continuing in Him, there will be no processes of prosecution, there will be no terror. The old sins lie buried, there is no resurrection for forgiven sins, they will never appear again; they shall not come into judgment. J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 121.

REFERENCES: v. 24.—R. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 17; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1642; J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 464. v. 24-30.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 495. v. 25.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 197; *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 277. v. 25-28.—C. J. Vaughan, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 262. v. 27.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 97 v. 27-29.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 451. v. 28, 29.—*Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 54; W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 412; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 896. v. 30.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. ii., p. 385. v. 32.—H. Calderwood, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 266. v. 35.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 95; J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 86; M. Dix, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 272; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 350; *Ibid.*, third series, vol. i., p. 329; W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 65; J. Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 168; G. Huntsworth, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 65; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 362. v. 37, 38.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 65.

Chap. v., vers. 39, 40.—**"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."**

SEARCHING Scripture and finding Christ.

I. It is evident that the failure of many men to find Christ is not from any deficiency in the means of discovering Him. It is this which our Lord so emphatically marks in the case of the Jews. They had the Scriptures, and they searched them. They had the mine, and they dug in that mine in quest of the eternal riches. They not only venerated, but almost worshipped,

the sacred volume. With privileges far less than the mass of professing Christians have now, they improved them far more. Yet, after all, they failed; multitudes of those who thus searched the Scriptures failed in finding Christ; or, if they found Him, found Him only to reject Him.

II. The failure in question does not arise wholly from a want of intelligence—right understanding in the use of the means. Observe the case of the Jews We have seen how they searched the oracles of Divine truth, and let us now observe the views with which they searched them. "Ye search the Scriptures," said Christ, "because in them ye think ye have eternal life." They thus sought the right thing, as well as sought it in the right place. How many Bible readers now-a-days are there of whom even this much can be said? Surely we may ask if the Pharisees and Scribes of those degenerate and unhappy days were not nearer the kingdom of heaven than many of ourselves?

III. Now, then, the true reason for the failure of these men. The evil lay in the will. "Ye are not willing," says Christ, "to come to Me, that ye might have life." It is thus a moral perversity, not an intellectual defect; not a want of light, but a want of love. The reason of this unwillingness is twofold:—(1) The natural carnality of the heart. By nature and by habit we live immersed in the things of sense. At home, among things outward, material, tangible, we with difficulty rise to any conception and contemplation of things spiritual and unseen. (2) The love of sin. They instinctively feel that they cannot come to Jesus and live in His Divine and holy fellowship and yet live in sin. They feel that there is a natural and eternal incompatibility between the two things. They may come to Jesus just as they are, but they cannot abide with Jesus just as they are. Therefore He and they remain strangers for ever. Learn, in conclusion (*a*) The preciousness of the Bible as a means of leading us to Jesus. (*b*) The worthlessness of the Bible if it leads us not to Christ.

J. BURNS, *Select Remains*, p. 18.

Chap. v., ver. 40.—"Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

THE Lamentations of Jesus.

I. Men, before regeneration, and apart from the salvation of God, are in a state which Jesus counts and calls death. In this plaint of the Saviour the true condition of sinners is seen with

awful distinctness. No room is left here for dispute or mistake. In the bosom of the Father, Jesus knows the mind of God. He sees the end from the beginning. On the foreground of time He declares that death is men's character; with His eye on eternity He pronounces that death will be their doom. If we remain to the last where we are found at first we shall be lost for ever.

II. In order to pass from death unto life, it is necessary to come to Jesus. The lost must wrench themselves away from a whole legion of possessing spirits,—come to Jesus as simply and as really as the cured demoniac came, to sit at His feet. To put off the old man and put on Christ is as real as to put off garments that are filthy and put on garments that are clean, and as great in its results as to put off this mortal and put on immortality.

III. In order to life, nothing more is needed than to come to Jesus. No preliminary qualification is demanded. No selection of persons according to their merits is made. None are excluded for the presence of one quality or the absence of another. To the dead one thing only is essential, that they should come to Christ.

IV. Those who are spiritually dead are not willing to come to Christ for life. This seems strange, even the Lord Himself wondered at their unbelief. It is the very mystery of iniquity, that man's resistance to the Divine proposal is great in proportion to the easiness of its terms.

V. Jesus complains that men will not come to Him for life. It follows from this, as clear and sure as the reflection of your face in a mirror, that He delights to give, to be eternal life to the lost. Here the Saviour opens His heart, that we may look in and see the love that fills it. I know not any passage of Scripture whence the compassion of Emmanuel more freely flows. This plaint, when interpreted aright, is more consoling than any promise—more solemnising than any terror. When Jesus tells us what grieves Him, we learn with certainty what would make Him glad. The inference is infallible. No truth can be more plain or more sure than this, that the flight of sinners to Himself for life is the chief delight of God our Saviour.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits of the Christian Life*, p. 38.

REFERENCES: v. 39.—W. Dorling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 232; vol. xxxii., p. 250; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, pp. 161, 162; J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 1st series, p. 8;

W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, pp. 42-58; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 186. v. 40—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., pp. 210, 326; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 47; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 642; L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of Christian Ideal*, p. 71; G. Macdonald, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 165; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 52; vol. xxii., No. 1324. v. 43.—F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 156. v. 44.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1245 vi. 1-10.—Phillips Brooks, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 364. vi. 1-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 59; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 291. vi. 1-15.—R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 357. vi. 3.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 136.

Chap. vi., ver. 5.—**"When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"**

THE Gospel Feast.

I. From the beginning the greatest rite of religion has been a feast; the partaking of God's bounties, in the way of nature, has been consecrated to a more immediate communion with God Himself.

II. In order to make this feasting still more solemn, it had been usual at all times to precede it by a direct act of religion—by a prayer, or blessing, or sacrifice, or by the presence of a priest, which implied it. Such seems to have been the common notion of communion with God all the world over, however gained, viz., that we arrive at the possession of His invisible gifts by participation in His visible; that there was some mysterious connection between the seen and the unseen; and that, by setting aside the choicest of His earthly bounties, as a specimen and representative of the whole, presenting it to Him for His blessing, and then taking, eating, and appropriating it, we had the best hope of getting those unknown and indefinite gifts which human nature needs.

III. The descriptions in the Old Testament of the perfect state of religious privilege, viz., that of the Gospel state which was to come, are continually made under the image of a feast—a feast of some special and choice goods of this world, corn, wine, and the like—goods of this world chosen from the mass as a specimen of all, as types and means of seeking, and means of obtaining, the unknown spiritual blessings which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard." May we not regard this feast in a cold, heartless way; keep at a distance from fear, when we should rejoice. May the spirit of the unprofitable servant never

be ours, who looked on his lord as a hard master rather than as a gracious benefactor. May we not be of those who went, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, when they were called to the wedding. Nor let us be of those who come in a formal, mechanical way, as a mere matter of obligation—without reverence, without awe, without wonder, without love. Nor let us fall into the sin of those who complained that they have nothing to gather but the manna, wearying of God's gifts. But let us come in faith and hope, and let us say to ourselves, "May this be the beginning to us of everlasting bliss."

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. v., p. 103.

REFERENCES: vi. 5.—F. W. Macdonald, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 40; W. Bullock, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 265. vi. 5-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 471; W. Hubbard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 107; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 227. vi. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1605; H. Goodwin, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 133.

Chap. vi., vers. 8-9.—**"One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"**

THE services of the despised.

I. The lesson I would draw from the scene is, on the one hand, the lesson of Christ's own gospel to poor, humble, ill-endowed, ungifted persons, and at the same time the encouragement, the blessing, the multiplication which He gives to little things. These ought not, I think, to be fantastic or meaningless lessons for us. For the immense majority of us are neither rich, nor great, nor noble, but just such humble, unknown persons; and very few among us have more than little gifts to offer. By far the most of us have not ten talents to offer for Christ's use, nor even five talents; we have at the best but one talent, and perhaps not even that. Well, the world thinks everything of this, but God thinks nothing of it. When the Master comes He will not ask how great or how small were our endowments and capabilities, but only how we have used them. If we have not neglected our poor talent, or even fraction of a talent, we, no less than the most richly gifted, shall be thrilled with the words, "Well done, good—faithful servant!" which will atone for ever for all afflictions.

II. Do not let us imagine, then, that we are too poor, too stupid, too ignorant, too obscurely situated, to do any real good

in the world where God has placed us. Christ loves the humble and accepts the little. Take but one instance—kind words. A kind word of praise, of sympathy, of encouragement—it would not cost you much, yet how often does pride, or envy, or indifference prevent you from speaking it. The cup of cold water, the barley loaves, the two farthings—how often we are too mean and too self-absorbed to give even these. And are we not to give them because we cannot endow hospitals, or build cathedrals, or write epics? Ah! if we be in the least sincere, in the least earnest, let us be encouraged. The little gifts of our poverty, the small services of our insignificance, the barley loaves of the Galilean boy on the desert plain, the one talent of poor dull persons like ourselves, are despised by the world; but they are accepted of, they will be infinitely rewarded by, Him without Whom no sparrow falls, Who numbers the very hairs of our heads, Who builds the vast continents by the toil of the coral insect, and by His grains of sand stays the raging of the sea. F. W. FARRAR, *Sunday Magazine*, 1886, p. 164.

REFERENCES: vi. 9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 281; *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 187; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 37. vi. 10, 11.—G. Huntington, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, 2nd series, p. 147.

Chap. vi., ver. 11.—**"And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would."**

THIS narrative falls mainly into two portions, both of which suggest for us some important lessons. There is first the preparations for the sign, and then there is the sign itself. Let us look at those two points in succession.

I. The preparations for the sign. Christ's preparation in making our poor resources adequate for anything, is to drive home into our hearts the consciousness of their insufficiency: "What are they among so many?" When we have once gone right down into the depths of felt impotence, and when our work has risen before us as if it were far too great for our poor strengths, which are weaknesses, then we are brought, and only then, into the position in which we may begin to hope that power equal to our desire will be poured into our souls. Note also the majestic preparation for blessing by obedience: "Make the men sit down." Sit you down when He bids you, and your mouths will not long be empty.

II. The sign itself. (1) It is a revelation of Christ continually, through all the ages sustaining man's physical life, for Christ is creator, our Christ is sustainer, our Christ moves the stars and feeds the sparrows. He opens His hand—and there is the print of a nail in it—and satisfies the desire of every living thing. (2) There is the sign and symbol of Him as the true bread and food of the world. That is the explanation and commentary which He Himself appends to it in the subsequent part of the chapter, in the great discourse which is founded upon this miracle.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, Feb. 25, 1886.

REFERENCES: vi. 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 89; H. J Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 166.

Chap. vi. ver. 12.—**"When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."**

THE Revised Version correctly makes a very slight but a very significant change in the words of this verse. Instead of "fragments," it reads, "broken pieces." The general notion, I suppose, is that the fragments are the crumbs that fell from each man's hands as he ate, and the picture before the imagination of the ordinary reader is that of the Apostles carefully collecting the *débris* of the meal from the grass where it had dropped. But the true notion is, that the "broken pieces which remain over" are the unused portions into which our Lord's miracle-working hands had broken the bread, and the true picture is that of the Apostles carefully putting away in store for future use the abundant provision which their Lord had made, beyond the needs of the hungry thousands. And that conception of the command, teaches far more beautiful and deeper lessons than the other.

I. We gather first that thought to which I have already referred as more strikingly brought out by the slight alteration of translation. We are taught to think of the large surplus in Christ's gifts over and above our need. Whom He feeds He feasts. His gifts answer our need, and over—answer it, for He is able to do exceeding abundantly above that which we ask or think; and neither our conceptions, nor our petitions, nor our present powers of receiving, are the real limits of the illimitable grace that is laid up for us in Christ, and which, potentially, we have each of us in our hands whenever we lay our hands on Him.

II. This command suggests for us Christ's thrift (if I may use the word) in the employment of this miraculous power. A law which characterises all the miraculous in both the Old and the New Testaments, and which broadly distinguishes Christ's miracles from all the false miracles of false religions, is this, that the miraculous is pared down to the smallest possible amount, that not one hairsbreadth beyond the necessity shall be done by miracle.

III. Not only does the injunction show us Christ's thrift in the employment of the supernatural, but it teaches us our duty of thrift and care in the use of the spiritual grace bestowed upon us. You have to use wisely, and not waste, the Bread of God that came down from heaven, or that Bread of God will not feed you.

IV. Finally, a solemn warning is implied in this command, and its reason that nothing be lost. Then, there is a possibility of losing the gift that is freely given to us. We may waste the bread, and so, some time or other when we are hungry, awake to the consciousness that it has dropped out of our slack hands.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, Dec. 24th, 1885.

REFERENCES: vi. 12.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 336; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 116; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 318; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 32; J. M. Neale, *Sermons to Children*, p. 234; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. i., p. 401; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 215; R. Heber, *Parish Sermons*, vol. i., p. 274; G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 219; H. Plummer, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 1. vi. 12, 13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 195.

Chap. vi., ver. 17.—**"And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them."**

NOTE here—

I. Christ's thoughts about His disciples. (1) He leaves men, whether the world in general or His own people in particular, for a time in fear and danger. The text records an isolated act, but it is an act in the government of the Unchanging One. The principle of that act runs through all His administration. (2) His delay is not a proof of neglect. He yearns over a sinning, suffering world, and regards His own with more than a mother's love. His delights were with the children of men before His abode was among them. The visions which godly patriarchs saw were glimpses of His countenance, as He bowed His heavens in longing anticipation before the fulness of time.

(3) Never and nowhere do they who wait upon the Lord wait in vain. Although to weary watchers the time seemed long, the coming was sure. He took our nature and dwelt among us. He followed these frightened Galileans over the troubled waters, and found them in the dark. Faithful is He that promised; He also will do it. To them that look for Him He will yet come, dispelling by His presence a thicker darkness, and calming a more terrible tempest by His word.

II. The disciples' thoughts about Christ. The storm and darkness made their hearts grieve; and all the more surely, therefore, did these hearts turn and point toward the mountain-top where Jesus, the Daysman, stood laying His hand upon God. They think not, they say not, If the moon should rise—if the gale should moderate—if the harbour were at hand; but if Jesus were here. Such single-eyed, artless truthfulness is sweet to His taste. The example of these Galileans is shown here as in a glass, that every mourner may thereby be encouraged to long for the presence of the Lord. When a deeper sea is heaving underneath and a thicker darkness closing round you, let your heart go out in truthful, fond desire to the Intercessor who trod then upon the mountain, and stands now on the steps of heaven's throne. He cannot withstand your appeal; He will come and will not tarry. Over these waters He will walk until He reach you. When Jesus has come, you are at the land. The moment that the Master comes, the disciples are at home.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits of the Christian Life*, p. 268.

REFERENCES: vi. 17.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 446; W. H. Jellie, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 216; T. T. Lynch, *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 206.

Chap. vi., vers. 19, 20.—**"So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid," etc.**

THE pathway of the King. We have here:

I. The struggling toilers. The solemn law under which we live demands persistent effort and imposes continual antagonism upon us. There is no reason why we should regard that as an evil, or think ourselves hardly used because we are not fair-weather sailors. The end of life is to make men; the meaning of all events is to mould character. Anything that makes me stronger is a blessing; anything that develops my *morale* is the highest good that can come to me.

II. The approaching Christ. We do not know at what hour in the fourth watch the Master came. But probably it was towards daybreak. Toiling had endured for a night. It would be in accordance with the symbolism that joy and help should come with the morning. If we look for a moment at the miraculous fact, apart from the symbolism, we have here a revelation of Christ as the Lord of the material universe, a kingdom wider in its range and profounder in its authority than that which the shouting crowd had sought to force upon Him. We have here a wonderful picture, which is true for all ages, of the mighty Christ to Whose gentle footfall the unquiet surges are as a marble pavement, and who draws near in the purposes of His love, unhindered by antagonism, and using even the opposing forces as the path for His triumphant progress.

III. The terror and the recognition. Do not we, like the disciples, often mistake the coming of the Master, and tremble before Him when we ought to be glad? Let no absorption in cares and duties, let no unchildlike murmurings, let no selfish abandonment to sorrow, blind you to the Lord that always comes near human hearts if they will only look and see.

IV. The end of the tempest and of the voyage. It is not always true—it is very seldom true—that when Christ comes on board opposition ends and the purpose is achieved. But it is always true that when Christ comes on board a new spirit comes into the men who have Him for their companion, and are conscious that they have. It makes their work easy, and makes them more than conquerors over what yet remains.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, March 11th, 1886.

REFERENCES: vi. 19.—A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 388. vi. 21.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 475. vi. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 947. vi. 27.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 111; J. Jackson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 225; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. i., p. 286. vi. 27-51.—D. Fraser, *The Metaphors of the Gospels*, p. 290.

Chap. vi., vers. 28, 29.—**"Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."**

DIFFICULTIES respecting Justification by Faith.

I. It is an important rule to seek for the most exact language on any subject in those writings which treat of it generally and directly, rather than in those where it is spoken

of by the way, the notice of it arising out of some other matter which was the writer's particular subject at the time. And, according to this view, we should expect to gain the clearest view of this question of justification from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, because the very object of that Epistle is to give a clear notion of that very point, as the foundation of Christianity; and, so far as we know, there was nothing in the particular circumstances of those to whom it was written which makes it more applicable to them than to others. It would seem, therefore, to explain St. Paul's language in other Epistles where he may touch upon the same subject incidentally, by his language upon it in the Epistle to the Romans, where he has written upon it expressly.

II. Now, it cannot be denied that the faith on which St. Paul lays so much stress, in the Epistle to the Romans, is opposed to the works of the law in this sense—that he who would be justified by the law says to God, "Thou hast commanded certain things, and I have done them, therefore I have earned my wages;" whereas he who would be justified by faith says rather, "Thou hast commanded certain things, and I have not done them, therefore I have earned no wages, but only displeasure, only I throw myself on Thee as on a God who forgavest sin." The essence, then, of justification by works is a reliance on what we have done for ourselves; that of justification by faith is a reliance on what God has done and will do for us.

III. But the difficulty lies beyond. If we look to our holiness of life for assurance, is not that to build upon the quicksand? Or if, without looking to ourselves, we look only to Christ, and hope and believe while we are full of sin, and look to be redeemed from death because Christ has died, although we have never risen with Him again to a new life of holiness—is not this to make Christ the minister of sin, and to hope where God says there is no hope? We must see, therefore, how it may be possible to seize the truth of each of these views, and yet escape their error. T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 263.

REFERENCES: vi. 28, 29.—J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 155; J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 172. vi. 29.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 27. vi. 32, 33.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 328.

Chap. vi., ver. 35.—"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life."

I. THE conversation of our Lord was well fitted to damp the zeal of those worldly-minded ones whose only object was to use

His aid in resisting the Roman power. He had never sought to make partisans. He would simply encourage the faith which would lead them, whose hearts were honest, from things temporal up to things spiritual. He shows that there is not only provided for us spiritual food—food for the soul; Christ not only is the giver of it, but yet more, the spiritual food is Himself.

II. It was impossible for those who heard our Lord at the time of His uttering these solemn words to understand their full import. But thus much they could understand, that having had proof that our Lord could give miraculous food, and that in some way or other He would confer it upon those who should abide with Him, it was their duty to have acknowledged Him, to have said, "We believe and are sure that Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God, and we will stay with Thee to be instructed further in the mysteries of that kingdom of which Thou art the King."

III. And when the kingdom of God was established, when our Lord had commissioned His Apostles and successors, what He did mean was fully known. To us, then, it is given to know that by union with Him we are united to God; and He thus is the support of the soul—to know that there is Bread from heaven, that Christ is that Bread; nay, further, that the Bread, the sustenance, with which He supplies us, is His Body and Blood, no longer visibly present, but sacramentally received by faith in the holy ordinance called on that very account the "Sacrament of His Body and Blood."

IV. By our Lord's command to gather up the fragments we are taught that it is sinful to waste any of the good things with which God may at any time bless us, and that it is our duty, when our souls are strengthened and refreshed by the Bread of Life, to take care that none of the superabundant grace be lost in us, but that we may abound more and more in works and labours of love.

W. F. HOOK, *Sermons on the Miracles*, vol. i., p. 321.

REFERENCES: vi. 35.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 220; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 286; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1112; F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 172.

Chap. vi., ver. 36.—**"But I said unto you, That ye also have seen Me, and believe not."**

THE Reason of Faith.

I. Look first at two kinds of faith which are universally practised; for if faith is, in the nature of things, absurd or

unintelligent, we shall be as likely to discover the fact here as anywhere. And we may discover, possibly, that the very persons who discard faith, as an offence to intelligence, are not even able to do the commonest acts of intelligence without it. (1) We begin, then, with the case of sight, or perception by sight. In our very seeing we see by faith, and without the faith we should only take in impressions to remain as lost things in the brain. Hence, perhaps, the word *perception*, a *through-taking*, because we have taken hold of objects through distances, and so have bridged the gulf between us and reality. Is, then, sight itself unintelligent because it includes an act of faith? Or, if we believe in realities, and have them by believing, would it be wiser to let alone realities, and live in figures and phantasms painted on the retina of our eyes? (2) But there is another kind of faith, less subtle than this, which also is universally practised, and admitted universally to be intelligent. It is that kind of faith which, after sensation is past or perception is completed, assigns truth to the things seen, and takes them to be sound historic verities. Thus, after Christ had been seen in all the facts of His life, it became a distinct question what to make of the fact—whether, possibly, there was any mistake in the senses, or any sleight-of-hand by which they were imposed upon. If God were to burn Himself into souls by lenses bigger than worlds, all you could say would be that so much impression is made, which impression is no historic verity to the mind, till the mind assents on its part, and concludes *itself* upon the impression. Then the impression becomes to it a real and historic fact, a sentence of credit passed. (3) We now come to the Christian, or third kind of faith. First, we complete an act of perception only by a kind of sense-faith, moving from ourselves, and not from the objects perceived. Next, we pass on to the historic verity, the moral genuineness, of what we see; and our act of credit, so passed, is also a kind of faith moving from us, and is something over and above all the impressions we have received. A third faith remains, that is just as intelligent, and, in fact, is only more intelligent than the others, because it carries their results forward into the true uses. This distinctively is the Christian faith, the faith of salvation, the believing unto life eternal. It is the act of trust by which one being, a sinner, commits himself to another being, a Saviour. It is the faith of a transaction.

II. Note some of the lessons this subject yields. (1) The mistake is here corrected of those who are continually assuming

that the Gospel is a theory, something to be thought out—not a new premiss of fact communicated by God, by men to be received in all the threefold gradations of faith. (2) We discover that the requirement of faith, as a condition of salvation, is not arbitrary, as many appear to suppose, but is only a declaration of the fact, before existing, that without faith there can be no deliverance from sin. (3) We perceive, in our subject, that mere impressions can never amount to faith. (4) Finally, it is very plain that what is now most wanted in the Christian world is more faith.

H. BUSHNELL, *The New Life*, p. 44.

REFERENCES: vi. 37.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 599; vol. xxx., No. 1762. vi. 37.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 385. vi. 39—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 361; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1117; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iv., p. 390.

Chap. vi., ver. 44.—**"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."**

THESE words have often been supposed to mean that no one can become a Christian unless an irresistible influence is put forth by God for his conversion. I think, if you look at the words of the text in their connection, and in relation to the circumstances in which they were written, you will see that Jesus is not here speaking either of an eternal "going" or of an irresistible "drawing."

I. What had drawn these crowds across the lake, away from their homes and their occupations? They cared merely for the material benefits which Christ's miracles conferred. They had eaten of the loaves and were filled. They were not following the drawing of the Father; they were merely drawn by the loaves and fishes. This was not the kind of coming Christ cared for. The crowds had come to Capernaum; they had not come to the Saviour.

II. To learn of the Father's teaching is to yield to the Father's drawing. So that the whole process here indicated is divisible in thought into three stages. First, there is the beginning; the Father teacheth—draweth. But not all whom the Father teaches listen as yet to His teaching—not all whom the Father draws yield as yet to His drawing. Hence, secondly, there is the middle point of separation: a man hears and learns of the Father; he accepts the teaching of the inward voice; he yields himself up to the inward drawing. Then, thirdly, there is the result;

the man who thus submits to the Divine teaching and drawing cometh unto Christ; he recognises in Christ one whom the Father has sent to meet the needs and longings which the Father Himself has awakened.

III. Never imagine that there may be a secret decree of God, shutting you out from salvation. "God willeth all men to be saved." Yield to the Father's drawing. By His providence, His Holy Word, His Gospel, His Spirit, He has often appealed to you. He has made you conscious of your need. He has made you think of your future. He has given you glimpses of a higher life which it is possible for you to live. Yield, then, to His drawing, and come to Christ as your Teacher, your Exemplar, your Redeemer, and your King.

T. C. FINLAYSON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 280.

REFERENCES: vi. 44.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 182. vi. 47.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., No. 1642. vi. 48.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 201. vi. 48, 49.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 110. vi. 48-54.—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 110; vol. ix., p. 201. vi. 52.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 52; Phillips Brooks, *The Candle of the Lord*, p. 232. vi. 52-63.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 31; B. Jowett, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 10.

I. WHEN our Lord spoke of Himself as the Bread from heaven, the Jews murmured at Him, and said, "Is not this Jesus, whose father and mother we know? How is it, then, that He saith, I came down from heaven?" Then it was that Jesus spoke the words of my text. All such murmurings and disputations would not bring them any nearer to Him or to the truth. If they would listen to the still small voice which was trying to make itself heard in their deepest nature, then the words of Jesus would attract them; but so long as they drowned the inward voice by mere disputations, these words of Jesus would be only likely to repel them. Yielding to the drawing of the world, they might murmur and discuss and dispute, but they would only be drawn away from Him; they could not really come to Him, unless they yielded to the drawing of the Father.

II. Where, then, is there in this any hint of an exclusive election, or of an irresistible grace? On the contrary, does not Jesus here quote from the prophets a wide, inclusive word: "They shall be all taught of God"? And is He not here virtually blaming those who do not believe in Him because they are not learning of the Father? The fact is, that we all stand between two drawings—the drawing of the flesh and the

drawing of the Spirit. And what the text says is, that no man can come to Christ except as drawn by the Father. This, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter: yield to the Father's drawing, and come to Christ as your Teacher, your Exemplar, your Redeemer, and your King.

J. C. FINLAYSON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 280.

Chap. vi., ver. 48.—"I am that bread of life."

I. IT is in the Lord himself alone that the power of life dwells, and from Him that it goes forth. There is no intermediate agent. He is the life of men, and it is by feeding on Himself that eternal life is both obtained and assured. But as in the miracle, so in this which is signified by it, He is pleased to impart this nourishment of life not without visible and sensible material, on which His life-giving power will be exercised. In the one case, it is the five loaves and the two fishes which represent and as it were carry the weight of so mighty a thing, in the other case, it is the visible Body and Blood of the Lord, whatsoever He is pleased to appoint to set them forth and carry the semblance of them to us. The great truth which underlies the whole is this, that Christ is the Bread of life, the only food of man for an eternity of vitality and blessing, that this blessing must come from no other than the Lord Himself in direct and personal contact with a man's own self in his inner being; but that He is pleased, in condescension to our weakness, to make use of signs and symbols whereupon His power acts, and by means of which man apprehends His life-giving power, and becomes partaker of it.

II. This incident our Lord's interpretation shows, as plainly as can be shown, that the ordinance of the Sacrament is not commemorative merely. An actual feeding upon Christ, not indeed corporeal, but spiritual, is spoken of throughout His discourse here. And when Christ said, "This do in remembrance of Me," it is plain that the remembrance is to be understood as bringing with it and involving not merely the revelation of an event past, or of a dear departed friend and benefactor, but the participation also in a present benefit, grounded on the realizing of that past event and the union with that Divine benefactor and source of life, in an actual and present manner. The discourse of which my text is part is thus of immense value to the Christian, as assuring him of a real living and feeding upon his Saviour, in that Sacrament,

rescuing him from the notion of its being merely a commemoration without present living benefit.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 233.

REFERENCES: vi. 48.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 201. vi. 48-54.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 110.

Chap. vi., ver. 51.—"My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

CHRIST is the life of the world. It is as the world's life that we have fellowship with Him. It is as the world's life that faith recognises Him and rejoices in Him. Christ our life! This is our watchword and our experience. To say that Christ is our life, is not only to say there is life in Christ for me, but that life is flowing down for me and into me. It is life most full and ample; it is life abiding and unbroken; it is life undeserved and unpurchased; it is life which no power of death nor influence of disease can affect and impair.

I. It is connection with Christ that brings the life into us. He is in heaven and we upon earth; but the greatness of distance matters not, provided there be connection—the connection, as it were, of a single wire. That single wire is faith. This is the one connecting medium; unbelief is the great non-conducting medium, which arrests in a moment all communication between heaven and earth. Faith only restores this, establishing the surest and most blessed of all connections between Christ and the soul, between heaven and earth.

II. It is connection with Christ that continues the life. The life is not like a treasure of gold brought to us and deposited with us to serve us for a lifetime. It is not like a lake or cistern of water formed within us, rendering us independent of all without us. It is something laid up in heaven, and transmitted down to earth, hour by hour, as light is deposited in the sun, and at each successive moment emitted from Him to us. The connection between us and Christ must be kept unbroken, else the life is us will fail.

III. Connection with Christ introduces us into the everlasting life hereafter. For the present is but the earnest of the coming life. It is into a glorious flower that the present bud expands; and its future expansion it owes to the same connection which quickened and nourished it here. For faith is the substance of things hoped for; and it is into these things hoped for that faith introduces us at last. The fulness of the life is yet to come. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," but we

know that the future life of vision into which the present life of faith is leading us, will be as unutterably blessed and glorious, as it is abiding and everlasting.

H. BONAR, *Christian Treasury*, 1868, p. 529.

Chap. vi., ver. 53.—"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

THE Words of Christ.

Let us take the words of the text, and by seeing the different ways in which they have been misinterpreted, let us learn to hold fast the lessons of our Lord in all their original freshness and piercing power.

I. First, there was the error of those who understood, or rather pretended to understand, our Lord's words according to the very letter, who said "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" It would have been such utter foolishness so to have misunderstood Him, that we cannot suppose that any one could really have been so ignorant. To follow the letter of our Lord's words on many occasions would either profit us nothing, or would absolutely be mischievous to us.

II. Theirs, however, is a more common error, who, not content with not following the letter of the commandment, lower and weaken the spirit also; and thus set up for themselves a different and less perfect rule of life than that which God has given us. Persons of this sort would explain the words of the text by saying "Except ye keep the commandments of Jesus Christ ye cannot be saved." Now, this doubtless is very true; but it is not exactly the whole truth of Christ's expression. To keep the commandments of Jesus Christ does not quite come up to the force of His own lively words that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. These words express that He must be to our souls what daily food is to our bodies; that we must live upon Him; that we must be ever walking by faith in Him; that we must look up to Him habitually in all our temptations, distresses, and perplexities—as our only deliverer, comforter, and guide; that we must be in communion with Him as members with their head; and this day by day, and always, for without Him we can do nothing, and our souls will sicken and fall away from their sound health if they are kept even a day without that nourishment, which turning to Him in prayer and in constant meditation can alone supply them with. Many persons, by forgetting the force and peculiar meaning of the command to make Christ our food, and by putting always in the place of

such lively expressions the mere injunction to obey Christ's law, have, in fact, grown cold in their feelings towards Him, have lost the sense of their close relationship to Him, have not held fast to Him as their Head, nor have sought of Him daily their spiritual nourishment and strength.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 208.

REFERENCES: vi. 53.—H. Alford, *Sermons on Christian Doctrine*, p. 294. vi. 53-56.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1288; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. iii., p. 105. vi. 53-57.—W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 154. vi. 54, 55.—F. Tugwell, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 383. vi. 55.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1460; R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 406.

Chap. vi., ver. 57 (with Gal. ii. ver. 20).—**"As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."**

THE Meaning of Justification by Faith.

I. Looking steadily at the two passages of Scripture which I have chosen for my text, we shall gain the clue to the full scriptural truth about justification. First of all, St. Paul, speaking of himself many years after his conversion, declares that he lives by faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him. It is manifest, then, that the principle of a Christian life, after the knowledge of Christ had been received, was still to be a faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. This faith entertained not once only, but always, ascribes clearly the whole merit of our justfication to Christ; that for His sake God looks upon us, not as enemies, but as children—not as condemned, but as forgiven.

II. And further, the Scripture supposes that whenever and so far as we realize to our minds the fact that God has forgiven us, we are also drawn to love Him as His children; nay, that the two feelings are in fact inseparable; that faith in Christ's atonement places us necessarily in the state of loving children to God; that if we do not love Him, such want of love is clearly one way or another a want of faith in Christ—either that we do not believe we needed the atonement, and therefore so far deny its reality, or do not believe that God has fully forgiven us, and so far deny its efficacy. But believing that we were without Christ dead, and that through Him we are alive and forgiven, that belief places us in the state of children towards God, with open and thankful hearts, loving Him because He first loved us.

III. St. Paul says, in his Epistle to the Romans, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Faith in Christ is not only faith in His having died for us; it is faith in Him as our Saviour now also by His life; it is that throwing ourselves upon Him in all things, as our Redeemer, as our Saviour, as our Head of whom we are members, deriving our life only from Him, which is expressed by our Lord in these remarkable words, where He says, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." And thus it is true that our faith in Christ alone justifies; our faith in His death once, in His life evermore —our faith in Him as redemption and as sanctification—our faith in Him leading to union with Him, that so being His members truly we shall be with Him and in Him evermore.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 271.

REFERENCES: vi. 57.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 345; *Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 357.

Chap. vi., ver. 58.—"This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

MEANS to Faith—the Scriptures and Prayer.

I. It is not enough to love the character of Christ; who can help loving it? It must be something of a closer and more personal feeling, if I may so speak, that will make Him become to us the bread of life; and this feeling will only be gained by prayer. The knowledge of the Scriptures brings rapidly before our minds all the promises we most need. It reminds us that we must be earnest in prayer, and not faint; that the kingdom of God is like the seed which grew up in its season, though it showed no signs of life at once; that he who shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.

II. Amidst our prayers, thus repeated, a wonderful change is effected within us; our dispositions are greatly softened and sweetened, our views of life and death become different, our interest in earthly things less engrossing; our selfishness generally less intense. And that this change, so real and so visible, is the work of the Holy Spirit of God—of the manner of which we can see and know nothing, but whose effects both we and all the world can witness—this we learn from the Scriptures; and it forms one of the great and most consoling truths of the revelation of Jesus Christ. Unquestionably, where this change is wrought, faith overcometh the world. The good

things which God has prepared for them that love Him, His love to us in Christ Jesus, the abiding influence of His spirit, all these are things which our prayers have made quite familiar, not to our ears only, but also to our hearts; they are things which have become the great interest of our lives, and we live in the daily consciousness of their reality.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 16.

REFERENCES: vi. 62.—F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 186. vi. 63.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 653; T. Lloyd, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 69; D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 221; Bishop Simpson, *Sermons*, p. 115; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 544.

Chap. vi., vers. 66, 67.—**"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him: Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"**

FORSAKEN ideal.

This sorrowful appeal from the less noble but natural feelings of the twelve to their very highest and most spiritual thoughts was not in this case in vain. The appeal "Will ye also go away?" revealed the higher nature of the Apostles, perhaps even to themselves; showed them that there was something within themselves beyond the judgment of the many, and of the worldly wise, which, without arrogance, could judge more forcibly, more wisely; enabled them to see more clear and bright than ever, the excellence of that Ideal which now for many months had been before them.

I. Who can tell what a sorrow it is for a soul to have set a really high ideal before it, and then to have taken the step of turning away, and to reflect for the rest of life on what might have been, with a little more perseverance, a little more faith in God. Let us think of the dangers that beset us here. There is (1) the danger of apathy. Even to look on such an ideal without love is hardening. To have a conception of some nobleness in character, and not to wish to possess it, not to make some effort after it, lowers us. (2) The danger of changeableness in our ideals—waste of time and power. As we all have different characters, as our capabilities differ, so do our conceptions. Then, to exchange our own for other men's views is often dangerous, but characters grow; they are not suddenly made. (3) The danger of misjudging other ideals. It is vain for us to think how well we should do in another man's place, instead of being earnest in doing well in our own.

II. Find out your work, then; find out the best outline of it, the ideal of it, and pursue it; knowing that in so doing you follow Christ, you follow light, you follow after life. "For he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Not in darkness with its fears and fantasies, and exaggerations of earthly objects, but with the light of life before him, fixed in a sure place to guide him, shining in a broad clear track on the face of the sea, shining on his face and rejoicing his eyes with its beauty,—not a light only, but a life, a breath, a spirit from on high.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life, Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 109.

REFERENCES: vi. 66.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 83; S. Macnaughton, *Real Religion and Real Life*, p. 209. vi. 66-69.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1646; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. xi., p. 258; vol. xiii., p. 257; A. F. Joscelyne, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 131; G. Jenkins, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 305; E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 18.

Chap. vi., vers. 66-71.

THE First Confession.

In connection with this narrative many practical lessons suggest themselves. I select only the following:

I. We are reminded by this history of the fluctuating character of human applause.

II. We are shown the tap-root from which all apostasy springs. Judas put temporal interests uppermost. The apostates were all wedded to the world.

III. The elements of Christian steadfastness. (1) The setting of spiritual things above temporal. (2) The experimental knowledge of Christ's salvation.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Peter the Apostle*, p. 65.

REFERENCES: vi. 67.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 184; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 78; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 297. vi. 67, 68.—G. Salmon, *Non-Miraculous Christianity*, p. 56; *Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 134; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 255. vi. 67-69.—A. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 187.

Chap. vi., vers. 67-70.

THE Danger of Relapse.

I. Experience has so often proved that men have not laid fast hold on the grace which they had received, that we may well conceive our Lord to say to each successive congregation who have professed to be His disciples, "Will ye also go

away? For eighteen hundred years I have accomplished the work of man's redemption. Your salvation has been purchased, the door of the kingdom of heaven has been set open, but yet, age after age and year after year, men have refused to be saved, and the way to eternal life has been thrown open to thousands in vain. Will ye also go away? Will ye also despise the riches of God's goodness and the precious blood of Christ, which purchased your salvation, and will ye go after your own desires, each man after the idols of his own heart, and be not saved, but lost?"

II. There is always danger in moments of recoil. In things not spiritual, we know that the mind often flies back too vehemently when its work is over, and abandons itself to total idleness. After every effort there is always the notion that we have earned our rest. How easily will the present drive out the past, unless Christ's grace preserve it to us? How readily will the mind turn in other directions, and the sun of our life will be veiled in clouds, so as neither to be seen nor felt? Pray that these clouds may not overshadow Him; pray that Christ may be present with us in our labours of to-morrow, even as He has been present with us here to-day. For indeed it is our privilege to be with Him ever, and to have Him ever with us; whether we eat or drink, or whatever thing, grave or light, we may be engaged in. There is nothing strange, nothing profane, nothing presumptuous, in praying that Christ may be with us in all those common works which our daily life brings with it. It is the great object of our finding Christ in the Church, it is the greatest object of our receiving the Holy Communion, that we should so find Him everywhere.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 155.

REFERENCES: vi. 67-71.—R. S. Candlish, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 20. vi. 68.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 9; Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 25. vi. 69.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 207.

Chap. vi., vers. 70, 71.—"Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" etc.

I. NOTE first, the relation of Judas and Jesus Christ. He was one of the twelve selected Apostles; he had all the privileges, all the opportunities, of Christ's near and dear companions; he was chosen, as were Peter and John and James, out of the increasing number of disciples, to be the chief companions—chief messengers of Jesus Christ. It is awful to think that an

Apostle was a betrayer; that a man so fenced about with safeguards, should make shipwreck of his soul.

II. What was it in Judas' case that made him a traitor? what lay at the root of the mischief? for he could not all at once have turned out so bad. The root of the mischief, the little seed which grew up and brought such a harvest of evil to Judas, was this: he was fond of money; and, unhappily for him, he had in his office of pursebearer an opportunity of indulging his love for money. Many a little act of pilfer, many a dishonest appropriation of the funds entrusted to him, must have preceded the final act of wickedness. When the love of money gets rooted in a man, it changes him for the worse. It deadens religion in his soul. It shuts up his compassion. It withholds his hand from doing good.

III. Observe what that sin was of which Judas was guilty—he betrayed his Master. We betray Christ when, from fear or any other motive, we shrink from confessing Him before men; when we stand by and see our Master denied and dishonoured, and have not the courage to show our colours. We betray Christ when we side with the enemy; when we fall away from His side; when we turn our backs upon His ordinances.

IV. All repentance is not true repentance; is not repentance unto life. The sorrow of Judas was the sorrow of the world that worketh death. It was despair. Could Judas have believed that God is gracious and mighty, even in his terrible situation he might have sought and obtained pardon.

R. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 74.

REFERENCES: vi.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 121. vi. 70, 71.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 155. vii. 5.—E. M. Goulburn, *The Gospel of the Childhood*, p. 235; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 45. vii. 6, 7.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 141. vii. 8.—H. Wace, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 197 vii. 11.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*; *Gospels and Acts*, p. 136. vii. 15.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 46.

Chap. vii., ver. 17.—**"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."**

THE general principle affirmed in the text is, that there is an unalterable connection between the perceptions of the mind and the moral state of the heart—between the understanding of truth and the practice of godliness. In other words, that

spiritual intelligence grows as proficiency in spiritual practice grows; and that, other things being equal, nay, even under circumstances of the most unfavourable intellectual disparity, that man will have the clearest, fullest, richest, deepest insight into Divine things, whose will is most obediently and deeply fashioned after the will of God.

The text holds good :—

I. Because a life of true obedience to the Divine precepts is most favourable to the operation of those thinking and feeling faculties, in and through which the knowledge of God reaches the soul. Religion, we must remember, addresses itself to the whole nature of man—that is, to all the parts of his intellectual, moral, and spiritual being. No man could know the doctrine, whose whole life was consciously opposed to the will of God, for he has determined not to know it; has raised as many obstacles as he can in the way of knowing it; used his reason, as far as he has used it, to sustain a false and foregone conclusion; putting out his own eyes, in order that he may be in a position to say, "I cannot see."

II. But the principle of our text goes much farther than this. Not only will a life opposed to the will of God raise up influences unfavourable to the reception of Divine truth, but a life which is according to that will, or which tries to be according to it, shall be blessed with a peculiar and special measure of religious knowledge—an understanding hid from the wise and prudent—of the deep things of God. Obedience strengthens love, and love induces likeness, and likeness is that which leads to the most perfect knowledge; nay, is the very means by which, in our glorified state, we are to have a true vision of God. The steps, or processes, of knowledge are unbroken; we pass from light to light, from glory to glory; from a comprehending with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, to a state in which, with the strong eagle gaze of our resurrection faculties, we see God face to face.

D. MOORE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3412.

REFERENCES: vii. 17.—J. N. Norton, *Every Sunday*, p. 150; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 399; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 187; A. W. Hare, *The Alton Sermons*, p. 42; W. Thomson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 193; S. G. Matthews, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiv., p. 37; G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 249; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 94; H. Melville, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2992; J. Clifford, *The Dawn of Manhood*, p. 83. vii. 19-35.—H. W. Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit Sermons*, 5th series, p. 417.

Chap. vii., ver. 24.—"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

I. ARE we to judge men according to the appearance of their life? There is a general social judgment which we must give. We look upon a man's outer life, and pass a sentence on it, either of praise or blame; and, so far as appearance goes, that sentence may be just, as long as the matters it judges are within the sphere of the broad lines of right and wrong. But in other matters it may be quite unjust. The human heart is hidden from us, and out of that alone can be drawn the materials for a righteous judgment of the lives of men.

II. Again, you are forbidden to judge the whole of a man's life from the results of his acts upon his own life. That is the way in which the world, while the man is alive, usually judges; and it is almost always wrong. We thank God that in the life of the Son of God, in the central life of history, a divine and eternal contradiction has been given to the world's lie—that obloquy and slander, and suffering and poverty, and shame and death, are any proof that a man's life is base or foolish or degraded. It is emblazoned on the walls of heaven and earth by the death of Christ, that the prosperous are not always right, and the sufferer not always wrong.

III. Again, you cannot judge a man's character according to the appearance of any single act. You must know the man before you can blame or praise him for the act. You must know the circumstances which preceded it, the many motives which entered into every act—the sum of which impelled it—before you can truly judge the man from the action.

On the whole, we have scarcely any right to judge at all, just because we know nothing but the appearance. When we know more, then we may with diffidence judge; but, for the most part, we have no business to make the judgment openly, unless it happen to be a judgment of love. Still, after long experience, a long labour towards certain qualities, we may attain some power of judging righteously. (1) The first of these qualities is to love men as Christ loved them, through utter loss of self; the other qualities are secured by love. With love comes (2) patience; (3) freedom from prejudice. These qualities are modes of love; and, in truth, love includes all we need for judging righteously of men.

S. A. BROOKE, *The Spirit of the Christian Life*, p. 42.

REFERENCES: vii. 24, *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 18; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 223.

Chap. vii., ver. 37.—**"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."**

ALL human desire, all human need, is expressed in this one word *thirst.*

I. Take, first, what may be called the lowest thirst of all—the thirst for happiness. If any man thirst, not for grace, but simply for happiness, let him come unto Jesus Christ and drink. If it is not a spiritual desire at first, coming to Christ will make it so; and if the man does not see how Jesus Christ can be of any service for his need, let him just look at the fact—made abundantly plain in this text, and in many a text besides—that Jesus Christ says He is able to meet that need exactly and completely, and then let him come and see.

II. Coming so, a man soon begins to be conscious of higher desires than this natural universal desire for happiness. Any one really coming to Jesus Christ, in that very act has grace, although he may not know it. He has the true beginnings of the gracious life; he has therefore—begins at least to have—thirsts of a higher and nobler kind, and these also he will have assuaged and satisfied. Thirst for righteousness arises, for a personal rectitude, for conformity of heart and habit and life to the holy will of God. Jesus, knowing on the feast day that He carried atonement and rectification and purity in Himself—in His blood and life, in His love and purpose—stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

III. But, once more, the thirst for righteousness does not contain within itself all the desire of a renewed soul. The affections are not satisfied with truth and rectitude in their abstract forms; but they have a distinctive thirst of their own, which we may call the thirst for love. The love of Christ will sanctify, ennoble, fulfil, all other; it will be to your yearning and sorrowing affection what no love but His can be.

IV. There is yet another thirst—profounder, vaster, more awful—which Christ only can satisfy,—the thirst *for very life.* Back from the dark realm of eternal oblivion the living soul recoils, and cries for life; out towards the realm of life it stretches, wherever that realm may seem to be. Who gives us this stupendous faith in life—future, eternal, happy life? Who but He who is the Life, and who brings life and immortality to light through the Gospel. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." A. RALEIGH, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 323.

CHRIST'S Call to the Thirsty.

I. Note, first, who are called. The invitation is to the thirsty. This thirst may be either general and unfixed, or it may be special and definite. It may be a thirst for something, many things, anything,—we scarcely know or care what; or it may be a thirst for some one precise thing, of which we have in part a distinct conception. To both kinds of thirst—but especially, as I think, to the latter—is our Lord's invitation in the text intended to be applicable. (1) It applies to the first sort of thirst. To the many who say, "Who will show us any good?" is the invitation addressed. Your conscious uneasiness indicates something wrong. Do not hastily conclude that the wrong is irremediable. You have been seeking more from the world than it was ever fitted or intended to yield. It is the tabernacle of your pilgrimage; it cannot be a home for your hearts. Seek ye then the Lord, and let your souls thirst for the living God. (2) The thirst referred to in the invitation of our Lord may be regarded as somewhat more definite and precise—as the thirst of a guilty conscience, a heart estranged from God, seeking and needing peace. Here is Christ, having all blessings in store for you—pardon, peace, reconciliation, renewal, hope, joy, the water of life; come unto Him without hesitation, without delay, without fear, without doubt. Come unto Him, and drink freely, copiously, continually.

II. The invitation is as simple as it is suitable. "Come unto Me and drink." It is faith viewed (1) as the faith of application —"let him come unto Me"; (2) as the faith of appropriation— "Drink." Whatever you need, seek not to attain to it directly, as if by an effort of your own; but go to Christ, seek it through Christ, seek it in Christ, seek Christ Himself, and the thing you need and want will be yours. You cannot directly, by any exertion of your own, compass any spiritual achievement. If you complain of weak faith, by no wishing and working can you make it strong. If of a cold heart, no working in or upon the heart itself will warm it. Come to Christ; be ever coming to Christ to drink.

R. S. CANDLISH, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 37.

CONSIDER:—

I. Man as a thirsty creature. We thirst for life, pleasure, activity, society, knowledge, power, esteem, and love. And we thirst for God. (1) All men have natural thirsts. (2) Besides these, there are secondary—derived thirsts. (3) The entrance of sin has produced depraved thirsts. (4) The return of man to God,

and his salvation by Jesus Christ, involve new thirsts. There is the thirst of the quickened spirit for particular religious knowledge, and the thirst of the penitent for pardon, the thirst of the new-born spirit for righteousness, the thirst of the godly for God, and the abiding thirst of the child of God for all that is godly, for being filled with the fulness of God.

II. Jesus Christ as a fountain of supply. (1) We thirst for continued life. Jesus saith, "Come unto Me, and drink!" "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Instead of weakness there shall be power; instead of dishonour, glory; and instead of corruption, incorruption; instead of mortality, everlasting life. (2) Do we thirst for activity? Hear Jesus say, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also." (3) We thirst for enjoyment, and still Jesus saith, "Come unto Me, and drink." Christ gives joy in every gift, and promises it in every promise. There is joy in the eternal life He gives, joy in the rest He gives, and joy in the peace which He bequeaths. (4) We thirst for power, and Christ continues to say, "Come unto Me, and drink!" for He makes His disciples now the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and ultimately He makes them kings and priests to God. (5) We thirst for society, and still Jesus saith, "Come unto Me, and drink." Our Saviour makes those who are strangers and foreigners and aliens, fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. (6) We thirst for the love of others, and Christ saith, "Come unto Me, and drink." For He directs streams of kindness to every one who comes to Him by means of His new commandment: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." All the thirsts of the God-born spirit are recognised in our text. The thirst of the depressed in spiritual life for the renewing of the Holy Ghost, the thirst of the backslider for reunion with God and with His people, the thirst of the doubter for certain religious knowledge, the thirst of the weary and heavy-laden for rest, and the thirst of the exhausted for renewal of strength—all thirsts, whatever may be the thirst, Jesus can slake it with living water. S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 254.

REFERENCES: vii. 37.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1875; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 367; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 286; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. xvi., p. 302; A. Raleigh, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 78. vii. 37-39.—H. P. Liddon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 91; F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 209; G. Clayton, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1724. vii. 38-39.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1662. Obbard, *Plain Sermons*, p. 143. vii. 45-53.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 509.

Chap. vii., ver. 46.—**"Never man spake like this Man."**

THE Epiphany of Wisdom.

I. On the nature of wisdom, the teaching of Holy Scripture is singularly clear and striking. It says there is a wisdom of man, and this is the knowledge of the true end or purpose of life—call it happiness, call it perfection, or what you will—a knowledge which answers, to some extent, those ever-recurring questions, "Why was I made?" and "What am I now?" and "Whither am I going?" This is the wisdom which the author of Ecclesiastes sought for everywhere, and yet hardly found. It is this, over which, as discovered, the Book of Proverbs rejoices as more precious than gold and jewels, and from the rough ore of which it forges the current coin of its proverbial philosophy. But there is also a wisdom of God, and this is the idea or purpose of His dispensation to man, rolling alike in the stately march of Nature's law, or in the little world of the soul within. The fear of the Lord is declared to be the beginning of wisdom, and to the desponding author of Ecclesiastes, it seems to be the whole treasure of man.

II. The Epiphany of wisdom is, for us, unlike the Epiphany of power in this—that it is not removed far away in the past, so that its voice comes to us only like the reverberations of some distant thunder—grand, indeed, and solemn, but so vague and indistinct that they may be drowned by the more incisive sounds of ordinary life. No; the words of the Lord are as living now as on the very day they were uttered. They indicate their unequalled grandeur in this—that, uttered by a Galilean carpenter eighteen centuries ago, they are universal in their application to all time and place. "Never man spake as this Man." And if that be true, there are three short practical questions which we may well consider:—(1) What means the Epiphany of wisdom, if it does not mean that He who speaks, being true man, is yet more than man—is, in some supreme and unique sense, revealer of the very mind of God? (2) And then, if this be so, is it not, in the next place, reasonable for us, in reverence and faith, to try the effect of His guidance in all the perplexities and needs of this life? (3) And if here also we find that His wisdom is a sufficient guide in all these questions and needs that we can understand, is it not then natural that, with regard to all those deep mysteries of eternity, and of Godhead, and of salvation—which we cannot discover, but which yet are of infinite moment to our life—is it not reasonable

that in these things we should yield also to His claim, and prepare, at least, to sit at His feet with something like inquiring and unhesitating faith?

BISHOP BARRY, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 33.

REFERENCES: vii. 46.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 951; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 321; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 35; G. W. McCree, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 101; F. Trestrail, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 141. vii. 53.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 137; W. Sanday, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 144. viii. 1-12.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 137. viii. 1-12.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 126. viii. 3-11.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 243; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. xv., p. 166. viii. 6.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 206. viii. 9.—A. Ramsay, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 100. viii. 11.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 100; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 116.

Chap. viii., ver. 12.—**"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."**

THE Festival of Epiphany.

I. There is no figure more common in Scripture, and none more beautiful, than that by which Christ is likened unto light. Incomprehensible in its nature, itself the first visible, and that by which all things are seen, light represents to us Christ, Whose generation none can declare, but Who must shine upon us ere we can know aught aright, whether of things Divine or human. Itself pure and uncontaminated, though visiting the lowest parts of the earth, and penetrating its most noisome recesses, what does light image, if not that undefiled Mediator who contracted no stain, though born of a woman in the likeness of sinful flesh? Who can question that the rising of Jesus Christ, was to the moral world what the sun is to the natural?

II. Without pleading that the state of the world, before Christ came, was a state of total darkness, we may yet affirm that Christ emphatically came as the light of the world. In no district of the earth—not even in Judæa, though privileged with revelation—was there anything that could be called more than the dawning of the day. Types there were—significative ceremonies—mysterious emblems, but these do not constitute the day. At best, they were but a twilight, that gave promise of the morning; and if that be all we can affirm of Judæa, then certainly, until the light of which we have been speaking, there brooded over other lands a darkness that might be felt. Here

and there were lingering traces of a patriarchial religion; but every year saw the gathering of thicker gloom, and streak after streak grew dim on the firmament.

III. Such was the state of the whole Gentile world when He appeared, whom the prophecy announced as "a light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." Was the testimony exaggerated, or has it been justified by events? Wheresoever the Gospel has been published and received as a communication from God, the darkness has fled as night flies before the sun. It hath hung the very grave with bright lamps, and rekindled the spirit of an almost quenched immortality. The pardon of sin, justification through the Mediator's righteousness, the gradual overcoming of the corruptions of nature, guidance in difficulty, guardianship in danger, comfort in affliction, triumph in death—all these are in the portion of him who follows Christ—followeth Him in faith as his surety, in obedience as his pattern. And are not these the light—yea, the light of life? H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit, No.* 1829.

I. JESUS had often spoken this word before. Every act of mercy He did, spoke to the men who were the subjects of it. St. John dwells specially upon His cure of blindness. He takes that as an instance, and the clearest and liveliest instance, of the effects which were produced by all His miracles. Each sufferer felt that a power of darkness had taken hold of him; that a portion of the beauty and joy of the universe was hidden from him. The appearance of a deliverer who could set him free from his plague, was the appearance of a Light. He was brought out of a cave; the air that breathed upon the rest of men, was breathing on him; the common sun was shining on him. Christ's word was light; the entrance of it into the soul gave light, and that light diffused itself through every part of the man. It brought health and vigour wherever it encountered sickness and decay.

II. Divines are wont to make distinctions between Christ the Teacher of the world at large, and Christ the Teacher of the heart and conscience of each man. They talk of an outward Christ and an inward Christ. The Evangelists indulge in no such refinements. The Christ who was born of the Virgin, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, reveals Himself—not to the eyes of those who actually see and handle Him, but to a spirit within them. And so there is no need of artificial rules and distinctions, such as doctors invent for their own confusion.

The Light makes the distinction. It is not the distinction of Pharisee or Publican, of religious men or irreligious. It goes deeper than that. It is the distinction between that in every man which welcomes the light, and claims kindred with it, and that in every man which eschews the light and would fain extinguish it for ever. It expresses itself in these words, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." The Light of the world is not put out. Now have death and the grave been converted into the great testimonies for life and immortality. Now may each man, who has the sentence of Adam upon him, know that he is a kinsman of the Son of God. Now may he follow Him; and so, when the darkness is thickest around him and within, not walk in it, but see the Light of Life.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 203.

REFERENCES: viii. 12.—H. Melvill, *Voices of the Year*, vol. i., p. 109; W. J. Hall, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 421; *Good Words*, vol. vi., p. 274; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 369; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 193; A. McAuslane, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 321; W. M. Taylor, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 80; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 250; E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 136. D. Fraser, *Metaphors of the Gospels*, p. 16. viii. 15.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 168. viii. 18.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 82; W. M. Taylor, *The Gospel Miracles*, p. 101. viii. 22.—T. Foster, *Lectures*, vol. i., p. 51.

Chap. viii., ver. 23.—**"And He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world I am not of this world."**

METHODS of Living.

There are three methods of living in this world: we may live from beneath, or from within ourselves, or from above.

I. I need only distinguish the first mentioned method of life from beneath. We can easily recognise it, or any temptation in our own thoughts, from its bottomless pit. The world has received Christian education enough to lead it, publicly and before men, at least to repudiate the method of the devil in life. Christianity has, at least, dethroned Satan from open public recognition, if it has not banished the demons of private life.

II. The second method of life just mentioned is a very common one, and is good so far as it goes. It contains much truth, leads to many honourable works. It is the effort to live as a human being may best live in the powers of his own reason, and out of the motives of his own heart. Persons whose idea of life is to develop themselves to the utmost of their own powers

and opportunities, to make the most, the best of their lives, often reach admirable results. But having acknowledged the fair fruits which we find growing sometimes upon this human, non-religious principle of living, if we turn now to the New Testament, we meet a difficulty in our text. The Scripture, apparently, fails to recognise this second, intermediate method of living. Jesus leaves out of his view of life altogether, the middle way. Jesus judges life as one looking back upon it from beyond the years; He speaks to human nature as one seeing into the eternal principles and necessities of things. The question between the Gospel with its two ways, and human nature with its third way, reduces itself to this: Is not this intermediate way—this middle method between heaven above and hell below—a path which we should reasonably expect would come somewhere to a break; when he who would follow it further will be compelled to scale the height, or plunge into the abyss? Is this method of life at least but a temporary or provisional method? And if this be so, can it now be justified as a necessary or reasonable expedient for a life?

III. We must allow that a provisional way of living is justifiable only upon the supposition that it is necessary, or that we can do no better. One may live as well as he can in a tent, provided there is no material at hand of which he may build a house. But there are materials, sound and ample, for a Christian home for life. Christ finds the child that was lost, and sets him in the midst of the Divine Fatherhood. The Christian life, the life from above, is the open, large, out-of-door life of the soul; the life not shut into itself, but looking out upon all realities and open to the whole day of God.

N. SMYTH, *The Reality of Faith*, p. 180.

REFERENCES: viii. 24.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Lent to Passiontide*, p. 357; G. S. Barrett, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 83. viii. 26.—F. W. Farrar, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 197.

Chap. viii., ver. 28.—**"Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things."**

THE Gathering of the Nations.

I. This text is a prophecy of the very widest scope. Christ is not so much addressing a few Jews as the whole world when He says: "Ye shall know that I am He." Christ is represented as the centre of attraction, towards which should be drawn from the

whole community, the material of that Church which is to be for ever the great trophy of Omnipotence.

It would not be true that Christ is the Saviour of all men and specially of them that believe, if there were other names besides His under heaven by and through which the guilty might be pardoned; but now that there is deliverance through this Mediator for all of every land, who are willing to receive Him as the free gift of God, and none except through that Mediator for a solitary individual in a single district of the earth,—we can affirm that by a Divine and irreversible appointment, the weary and the heavy-laden must be brought to Christ, or remain for ever burdened and laden with the weight of their iniquities. And they are brought to Christ; He is sending out His ministers to every section of the habitable globe, and His Spirit is everywhere accompanying the message, and making it mighty to the casting down the strongholds of ignorance and unbelief. In one quarter and another—one of this family and two of that—the nations are being subdued to the Messiah: there is enough, abundantly enough, to prove that all of which the prophets have spoken shall yet be gloriously exhibited on the stage of this creation.

II. But if we can plead that the prophecy before us has already received, and is constantly receiving, a partial accomplishment, are not coming days charged with its unrestricted fulfilment? It is possible that the thoughts of the Saviour, when uttering this prediction, were on the glorious and palmy days of the Church—days for which the faithful from the beginning have earnestly longed, and on which inspired writers have lavished the majesty of their loftiest descriptions. When the men of every age and of every land, linked in indissoluble brotherhood, shall crowd towards the Mediator as their common deliverer, their all in all, and cast their crowns at His feet, and sweep their harps to His praise, then will the prophecy receive its last and its noblest accomplishment; and all orders of intelligence, connecting the crucifixion, as a cause, with the magnificent gathering as an effect, will bear its enraptured witness to the thorough verification of the words, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He."

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1699.

REFERENCES: viii. 29.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1165; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 264; F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 226. viii. 31.—F. F. Goe, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 930. viii. 31, 32.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 318; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. viii. 31-35.—J. Caird, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 376.

Chap. viii., ver. 32.—**"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

THERE are two powers that chiefly fashion our characters, and through our characters our lives, and these two are the discipline which we undergo either from ourselves or from others or from circumstances, the light wherewith God enlightens our souls. We live in the midst of our fellows, and we catch from them peculiar habits of action, of feeling, of thought. But discipline is not the only power that forms us; there is another power that acts in another way, and that is the power of clear insight, the power given by the light of truth, whenever that light reaches the soul. The discipline of life is bound up with the discipline of the conscience, and each helps or hinders the other.

I. It is the light, it is the possession of the truth, that makes the man free. This light is necessary to crown all other inward gifts. I do not say that light is the highest gift; love is surely higher, and that humility which is the especial mark of love. But light is the gift which brings with it true freedom. Light is the gift which makes all other gifts have their fullest and best use. Even love needs light to do its work. How large a part of the uncharitableness of mankind is really due to the want of light. The fact is, that there is no such bondage as darkness. The darkness that hides the truth, more effectually robs the man of his real freedom, than even his weakness and want of desire to have that freedom.

II. Now, how does the light come, and can we do anything to bring it? The light of truth is in some degree like the light of heaven. It comes by God's ordinance for the most part, and not wholly by man's seeking. The pearl of great price was found by the man who was seeking goodly pearls. He sought for truth; and he found in the course of his search the one truth of all. But the treasure hid in a field was found by one who was not seeking at all. The truth was given in the course of God's providence, and looked as if it came by chance. No man can be certain of finding the great truth which shall light up his own individual life in a particular way, or at a particular time. All that can be said is, that to this case emphatically the promise applies, "He that seeketh, findeth." In other words, the first condition of finding the truth is that you shall wish to find it.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 149.

REFERENCES: viii. 32.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 104; vol. x., p. 193; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 399;

Preacher's Monthly, vol. x., p. 39; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 1; vol. xv., p. 102; E. de Pressensé, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 68. viii. 33.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 85. viii. 33-36.—G. Salmon, *Non-Miraculous Christianity*, p. 206. viii. 33-48.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 22. viii. 34.—S. Baring Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 136; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 103; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 88.

Chap. viii., ver. 35.—**"And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever."**

I. We see here the possible ending of the tyranny of sin. "A slave abides not in the house for ever." Therefore the very fact that the service of sin is so hard a slavery shows it to be unnatural, abnormal, and capable of a termination.

II. The actual deliverer, "The Son abideth ever." "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The conversion of the mere possibility of freedom into actual fact requires two things: that the Deliverer should be the Son of God, and that He should be the Son of man.

A. Maclaren, *Sermons preached in Manchester*, 3rd series, p. 31.

References: viii. 36.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 565; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. xi., p. 321; E. de Pressensé, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 68; J. Keble, *Sermons from Lent to Passiontide*, p. 346; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2627. viii. 37.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes, Gospels and Acts*, p. 142.

Chap. viii., ver. 39.—**"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."**

The great law which Christ here lays down is that that which s historically true may be morally false; men may be genealogically akin, and spiritually alien; natural relation may be forfeited by moral apostasy.

I. Jesus Christ dispossesses men of pedigree and claim, and status and record, unless the men themselves are of the right bulk and colour and quality and force. The Abrahamic dignity is not superimposed, or handed down like an heirloom; every man must support his claim by his spirit and his action. If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham; but because ye do not the works of Abraham, ye have no right to use the holy man's name.

II. Jesus Christ showed the Jews, and therefore showed all men, what the test is by which a pure descent may be known. If God were your father, ye would love Me—that is the test—because ye would know Me; my disguise would not conceal

Me, you would be moved by a strange feeling of kinship; you would say, Though we never saw this man before, He belongs to us and we belong to Him; in His voice is music, in His touch is resurrection; we will take up our abode with Him. If God were your father, you would rise above all local prejudice, and seize the essence of the truth; you would know the Divine through every disguise.

III. If, then, we are of God, and have the really godly spirit in us, wherever we find truth, or beauty, or the beginning of the best life, we shall say, Lo, God is here, and I knew it not; this heathen book is, in respect of all these deep, true, pure words, none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. Here is a flower growing in the fissures of a rock; is it an orphan flower? is it a self-made flower? If it could come down from its rocky heights and walk into the well-cultured garden, might it not say, "We have all one father, and one gardener hath taken care of us every one? I am glad to have come down from my stony isolation, and I am thankful to be able to join the floral brotherhood." What if the garden brotherhood should say, "We do not know thee; we are of our father the gardener; who art thou? what is thy pedigree?" They would be foolish flowers, and not deserve to live another year. It is by the operation of this same law that we know brotherhood. Being of the same quality, we accost one another in the same language.

PARKER, *Christian Commonwealth*, Feb. 17th, 1887.

REFERENCES: viii. 42.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1257; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 313; Parker, *Sermons in Union Chapel, Islington*, p. 118; *Ibid., Inner Life of Christ*, vol. iii., p. 302. viii. 43.—F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 240. viii. 44.—E. Paxton Hood, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. ii., p. 285. viii. 45.—*Homilist*, vol. iii., p. 629.

Chap. viii., ver. 46.—"Which of you convinceth Me or sin?"

THE Absolute Sinlessness of Christ.

I. The sinlessness of our Lord has been supposed to be compromised by the conditions of the development of His life as man—sometimes by particular acts and sayings which are recorded of Him. When, for instance, we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews that our Lord "learned obedience by the things that He suffered," this, it is argued, clearly means progress from moral deficiency to moral sufficiency, and as a consequence it implies in Him a time when He was morally imperfect; but, although the growth of our Lord's moral nature as man

implies that as a truly human nature He was finite, it does not by any means follow that such a growth involved sin as its starting point. A moral development may be perfect and pure, and yet be a development. A progress from a more or less expanded degree of perfection is not to be confounded with a progress from sin to holiness. In the latter case there is an element of antagonism in the will which is wholly wanting in the former. Christ's life is a revelation of the moral life of God, completing God's previous revelations, not merely teaching us what God is in formulas addressed to our understanding, but showing us what He is in characters which may be read by our very senses and which may take possession of our hearts.

II. Now, the sinless Christ satisfies a deep want of the soul of man—the want of an ideal. Other ideals, great as they are in their several ways, fall short, each of them, of perfection, in some particular, on some side. When we examine them closely, however reverently we scan them, there is One beyond them all —only One—One who does not fail. They, standing beneath His throne, say, each of them, to us with St. Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." But He, above them all, asks each generation of His worshippers—asks each generation of His critics—that passes along beneath His throne, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"

III. The sinless Christ is also the true Reconciler between God and man. His death was the crowning act of a life which throughout had been sacrificial; but, had He been conscious of any inward stain, how could He have desired—how could He have dared—to offer Himself in sacrifice to free a world from sin? Had there been in Him any taint—the least of personal evil to purge away, His death might have been endured on account of His own guilt. It is His absolute sinlessness which makes it certain that He died, as He lived, for others.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 511.

A SENSE of Sin.

I. A sense of sin is chiefly fed by the Holy Ghost on the fruits of evil, the results which it always bears. Those are the providences of God to awaken and strengthen the sense of sin; and He has surrounded us with the sorrows and the evils and the shame that spring from weakness, in order to prevent the healthy soul from becoming indifferent to evil. The act of sin in a man is not the real spiritual evil that has long been lurking and hiding about a man's mind and heart and soul. The fault is only the bodily shape of the spiritual wickedness by which

God in His mercy revealed the sinner to Himself. We are not punished at last for that lie, or for that blow, or that word sharper than any blow; but we are punished for that internal nature, for that violent heart, for that unloving and unlovely soul which cannot get to heaven, which has daily grown by use and become by habit our second nature, slowly overgrowing and choking all the good seed which our Lord has sown in the fields of our life, and counteracting all the graces by which He has sought throughout our life to give us a new heart in communion with His own.

II. When a man has been kept from all open and flagrant acts of sin by the Hand that held him up, he is apt to grow self-righteous and self-satisfied; he slowly enters into the family of the Pharisee. The sins we do speak for themselves, and the danger is light compared with that self-esteem, or at least that self-content, that prevented men from coming to the Baptist, and at last prevented them from coming to our Lord. There are truer measures for sin than those which the law has laid down. The use of sin is to convince us of our sinfulness, to bear witness with the Word of God that we cannot win heaven by our own goodness, nor deserve the good things which the Lord provides. J. GOTT, *Family Churchman*, April 28th, 1886.

REFERENCES: viii. 46.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 492; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 6; H. P. Liddon, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 83; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 315; S. Leathes, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 299. viii. 46-59. —*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 150; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 60.

Chap. viii., ver. 48.—**"Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"**

THE Bad Mind makes a Bad Element.

I. This subject puts in a sad light of evidence what may well enough be called the weak point of Christianity—viz., the fact that the souls to be saved will be always seeing themselves in it, and not seeing it as it is; turning it thus into an element as dry as their dryness, as bitter as their bitterness, as distasteful and oppressive as their own weak thraldom under sin. The grand difficulty in the way of a general conversion is, that the bad minds of the world so immediately convert the gospel into their own figure.

II. We here perceive what is the true value of condition. I do not blame, of course, a true attention to condition; it is even a duty. But the notion that we are really to make our state

bad or good by the surroundings of life, and not by what is within us, not only violates the Scripture counsel, but quite as palpably the dictates of good sense; it is, in fact, the great folly of man. For a bad mind is of necessity its own bad state, and that state will be just as bad as the man is to himself, neither more nor less, come what may. If the bad state is in you, then everything is bad; the internal disorder makes all things an element of disorder—even the sun in the sky will be your enemy.

III. We discover in this subject what opinion to hold of the meaning and dignity of the state sometimes called misanthropy. This very foolish state of mind has one legitimate cure, and one that is true reason itself—conviction of sin. Misanthropy and world-sickness are the bad state felt; conviction of sin is the bad state understood. That is a conceited misery; this the shame of a self-discovering weakness, guilt, and spiritual disorder.

IV. It is clear, on this subject, that we have little reason for troubling ourselves on questions that relate to a place of future misery. The bad mind has the fire and brimstone in itself.

V. The salvation of man is possible only on the ground of a great and radical change in his inmost temper and spirit. What is wanted for the felicity of man is clearly not a change of place or condition, but a change in that which makes both place and condition what they are.

H. BUSHNELL, *Christ and His Salvation*, p. 278.

Chap. viii., ver. 51.—**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death."**

CHRIST our Life.

I. In Christ all shall be made alive; but that the depth and extent of the Scriptural term life can never be limited to the mere revival of the soul from death or unconsciousness seems obvious on the most cursory inspection of the sacred volume. So far is mere immortality from answering to this gift of life, that there is a species of immortality to which the title of death, "eternal death," and the "second death" is given. It appears hence that this life, as well as the death spoken of in the text, is essentially a moral, not a merely physical, state or notion; that it is a blessed and spiritual vitality. To express His highest spiritual bestowments no term is more frequently employed by our blessed Lord than "light." Now, this light is itself perpetually connected with His descriptions or intimations of the life He was to bestow. "My followers shall have the

'light of life,'" He declares to the Pharisees; while the shadow of death is, as you know, the constant type of a state of hopeless spiritual ruin.

II. The more you reflect on this mighty theme, the more you will see that Christ's offer, instead of being limited to any of the forms of life, grasps them all; that He must raise the dead as Judge and Saviour, that He may punish and that He may save; that He bestows a quickening principle of spiritual life upon the soul, which must pass the grave, for nothing holy can perish; it partakes of the Divine nature; it is incorruptible seed, and must flower in Paradise; finally, that of this last consummate state He is also Lord and Donor, and in love shall rejoice as He beholds the same light which once was dawn hereafter settling on that noon which knows no sunset.

III. "He that keepeth My saying shall never see death." Many a dark century has passed away since the walls of the temple echoed these glorious words—words, one would deem, that, uttered from God to man, might well change the face of the world. It is no *momentary* adoption of the faith and law of Christ to which eternal life is the promised recompense. God will not condescend to take His place among the fashions of the day. Christianity is a new *life*.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons, Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 90.

REFERENCES: viii. 51.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 89; H. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 176. viii. 54.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 241.

Chap. viii., ver. 56.—"Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad."

CHRIST'S Day, or Christmas Joys.

I. The text does not tell us that Abraham had any distinct foresight of the manner of Christ's birth. That was a mystery which remained locked up in the secret chambers of God's counsels, until it seemed good to the Holy Ghost to reveal it to the prophet Isaiah. But the meaning of the words *My day* in the text must clearly be the day or season of Christ's coming, and dwelling upon earth, the day or season of that earthly life into which He entered. This, then, is the day which our father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see, the day of the coming of Him in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, the day of Christ's coming to dwell upon earth, in order that He might deliver mankind from their sins.

II. If we have the spirit of Abraham, if we have the faith of Abraham, we must rejoice, as Abraham rejoiced, in the thought

that we are to see Christ's day. The Christian is to rejoice at the coming of Christ, because He who is the Lord of light and life brings both one and the other. This He did, when He first came, to the whole world. The whole world was lying in darkness and in the shadow of death, when the Sun of righteousness arose and turned its darkness into light, its night into day. The whole world was rotten at heart and palsied in all its limbs, when Christ came and breathed His spirit into it, and said, "Arise and walk." And as it was with the whole world, when Christ first came as on this day to deliver it out of its deadly darkness, so is it still with the soul of every one to whom Christ comes for the first time. These, then, are the reasons why we are to rejoice in the coming of Christ; that, whereas without Christ we are blind, Christ opens our eyes and enables us to see; that whereas without Christ we are deaf, Christ enables us to hear; that whereas without Christ we are in darkness and know not where we are nor whither we go, Christ sheds the clearest, brightest light both upon us and upon everything around us: that, further, whereas without Christ we are bound with the chains of sin, Christ came to burst those chains and to deliver us into the glorious liberty of the children of God; in a word that, whereas without Christ we are without God in the world, Christ has set us at one with God—that, whereas without Christ we are at war with God, with each other, and with ourselves, Christ came to bring us peace with ourselves, with each other, and with God.

J. C. HARE, *Sermons in Herstmonceux Church*, p. 111.

REFERENCES: viii. 56.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 20; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 151.

Chap. viii., ver. 58.—**"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."**

THE text is one of those rare passages in which Jesus Christ appears to stand upon His own dignity, in which the Lowly, the Humble, the Unresisting Son of man asserts His high origin, claiming to be God, for it amounts to no less: God from everlasting. "Before Abraham was, I am."

I. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ. He had a glimpse of that day of the birth of Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, as He had a glimpse also of the manner in which Jesus Christ should work out our redemption. He took his son Isaac and offered him up on Mount Moriah—that Isaac so exceedingly dear, of whom it was said, that "in Isaac shall

thy seed be called." He offered him up, his one hope of becoming the father of many nations. And that act of Abraham —that act of faith, was counted unto him for righteousness; and he is held up for ever as the father of the faithful. To him, as St. Paul writes, "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, *preached before the Gospel*, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

II. Jesus Christ Himself lived before Abraham was born. Whenever God is spoken of as holding communion and as being visible to man, it is in the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, God, the Son, Jesus Christ. It is He who declares to us the Father. It is He who represents God to us, and is Himself God, even Jesus Christ. This was He who talked with and was called the friend of Abraham. It was He who was the Giver of the Law to Moses, it is He by whose agency the worlds were made, God the Supreme Deity dwelleth in the light which no man can approach: but Jesus Christ who is the image of the Invisible God, hath manifested, made known, declared to us, what God is; how good, how gracious, how ready to forgive, and how rich in mercy to those who call upon Him. It follows, then, that we should honour and worship Him as God, we should draw near with all reverence, with all holiness, with bowed heads and bowed hearts, to present our supplication before Him.

R. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 62.

REFERENCES: viii. 58.—G. T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 88; C. Kingsley, *All Saints' Day, and Other Sermons*, p. 116. viii. 59.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Septuagesima to Ash Wednesday*, p. 343. viii. 59.—A. P. Stanley, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 79; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vii., p. 57. ix. 1.—T. Birkett Dover, *The Ministry of Mercy*, p. 123. ix. 1.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 103; S. G. Matthews, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 266; J. Keble, *Sermons on Various Occasions*, p. 475.

Chap. ix., vers. 1-3.—"And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth," etc.

SIN a Disease.

I. The instinct that there is a connection between sin and penalty is universal and from God. The grossest forms of sacrifice that have made the name of religion horrible had their root in a true instinct. The revelation of God in Christ came not to uproot this belief, but to interpret it, to guide it, to lead it to bear fruit. Bodily sickness is to a certain extent the lot of all, and we may not show ourselves anxious to connect it with

the notion of punishment for specific acts. We have learned, too, since the days of the first Christians, something more of the laws of health than they were acquainted with, and this knowledge tends to reduce within narrower limits the afflictions which we designate as judgments. But the tendency to view sin and punishment as different things and the connection between them as arbitrary, is unhappily not less strong in the full light of the nineteenth century than in the glimmering dawn in which the first Christians walked.

II. Jesus said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." We are to understand this answer with reference to the question which provoked it. The man had, we are sure, been a sinner and his parents also. But there was no special unrighteousness, either in the parents or the child, which had brought on them this sad calamity.

The *works* of God were to be made manifest in this man—not *one work* only; therefore not the miracle of a sudden restoration to sight by itself. The miracle is a sign—a witness, that is, of the nature of Him who wrought it. The incident which opened the eyes of the poor vagrant is one of those which have let in light upon a sin-blinded world.

III. In all evil, in disease and in disorder, is a work of God made manifest; because we see these things to be evil through the light which is His. That sin is seen to be sin; that disease and death are recognised as the enemies of a Divine order; that we are aware, as St. Paul became aware, of a body of death to which we are bound prisoners; that, in fine, we feel the punishment of sin is matter for profound thankfulness. That we know our degradation is, at least, to know the height from which we have fallen. Sin is inextricably bound up with punishment, and if the thought is terrible, there is one more terrible still, and that is the thought of sin without punishment.

A. AINGER, *Sermons in the Temple Church.*

REFERENCES: ix. 1-3, S. COX, *Expositions*, p. 153, 4th series, p. 163; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 397. ix. 1-7.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 349. ix. 1-8.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. v., p. 136. ix. 1-41.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 301.

Chap. ix., vers. 2, 3.—**"And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin? " etc.**

THE Discipline of Sorrow.

It is not very easy to see, nor is it necessary for us to determine, in what way the disciples thought that a man could be born blind in consequence of his own sins. They may have

supposed that it was done in a kind of anticipatory justice, and that God, knowing beforehand that the man would commit some sin, punished it before it was done, by causing him to be born blind. However this may be, the intention of the whole passage is abundantly clear. Our Lord is checking and rebuking that tendency which is strong in all minds, and very strong in some, so to trace back suffering and sin as to find the cause of their unhappiness in some particular wrong thing which has been done.

I. Let us see how far we are safe to connect any present sorrow with sin, and what is the true view and the right use of a trial. It is mercifully ordered, in the natural body, that when there is any mischief going on in any part, it is almost sure to set up pain. So I would lay it down, that everyone who is in any way distressed, should look first to see if there is anything wrong, of which that pain is meant to be the index and the monitor. But when that is once done, I would not dwell there, but I would turn straight to the future. I would consider, not, For what past thing is this sent? but, What coming thing is this to bring about? To what design of God is this meant to give effect?

II. And this is the way by which a sorrow shall quicken and elevate and ennoble a man. For the danger of sorrow is the want of elasticity. If there were more spring, it would do you more good. And that onward look to some happy expected end, is just that which induces that play of mind, and that hopefulness, without which no sorrow will ever fulfil its mission. To look back, shuts a man to the past, and sets him grovelling in its ashes. To see a dawn of brighter things, to take the darkness as the signal that Christ is near, to have faith in a good to-morrow, to realize the greatnesses that are waiting, and, by believing them, to command the manifestation of the works of God—this is to bring in the covenanted dawn, and cancel the bitterness of the present hour; this is the true office of grief, and this is the secret of a sanctified sorrow and a glorified God. J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1868, p. 21.

REFERENCES: ix. 3, 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 756; vol. xvi., No. 943.

Chap. ix., ver. 4.—**"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."**

THE principle which makes work Christian is the will and the glory of God. In the midst of our working life, in the midst

of our religious thought, in our times of devotion, in our hours of prayer, Jesus speaks to us and bears His unflinching testimony, calling upon the Christian to persevere, making his work true.

He does it, I submit to you, in three ways.

I. He does it because He has robed Himself in our humanity. Robing Himself in our humanity, Jesus has added a dignity to our nature. It was made in the image of the Eternal; it was created indeed with that stamp upon it which even original sin could not altogether wipe out. But Jesus, by the Incarnation, has done something more. He has robed Himself—most high God—in that nature; thereby He has added dignity; and by the fact that you have been dignified, by your nature being taken into God, by that fact you are taught that the dignity of that nature is never satisfied, unless entirely you aim in your work to do God's will, and set forth God's glory. So He has borne and is bearing His witness.

II. He bore it further, by Himself toiling and teaching in that nature; He showed to you and me not only its dignity—He showed its power. The power of human nature is all but infinite—all but infinite as seen in the work it can do, when it is assisted by the power which our blessed Master exerted most—by the power of God. You have, in a sense, power to do even as God does, rising up into the life of God.

III. Need I add that He witnessed to it by His death? Not only by being robed in humanity, not only by showing the power of humanity to God; but by dying in this humanity; by exhibiting to us, in this way, the immensity of the value that God placed upon it, He taught us its only end in labour. If the Christian is to do his work, it does not matter about the dimensions of its outward expression; it does not matter about the texture of the material; the great point for you and me to see to, is that the principle lying behind it be real, one that is maintained in its reality by the grace of the blessed Spirit, by the example of our divine Redeemer—that principle being that its aim and object are the will and the glory of God.

W. J. KNOX-LITTLE, *Characteristics of the Christian Life*, p. 1.

CHRIST'S words and Christ's work.

In these words of our Lord there is nothing which peculiarly belongs to His Divine nature, nothing even which belongs to Him as a prophet; they were spoken as by One who was in all points tempted like as we are by One who became fully

partaker of our flesh and blood. They are His words spoken as He is our great example. It is no presumption, no claiming to ourselves any portion of His power, if we pray and labour to be able to repeat them ourselves truly.

I. We must work, and that diligently; but not Satan's work or our own, but the works of God. The soil must bear much, but its strength must not be wasted on weeds, however luxuriant; it must bear that which will be kept for ever; we must work while it is day, for the night is coming. Even while working busily, and working the works of God, we must not forget our own infirmity, we must remember and repeat Christ's words in the text—for in them He speaks as one of us, and not as our God. "The night cometh, when no man can work," the day which is so happy to us, and we would fain hope not unprofitably wasted, is yet hastening to its close. It is of no less importance that we should remember that the time is soon coming when we cannot work, than that we should avail ourselves of the time present, to work in it to the utmost.

II. One difficulty which arises is this, that in one sense we are working the work of God probably already; for certainly the particular business of our profession, or calling, or situation, is to us the work of God. This seems to me one of the most dangerous snares of all; we are busy, and we are busy about our duty, so that the more we work, we fancy that we are doing our duty more, and the very thing which seems to be our help is unto us an occasion of falling. That it should not be so, two things are to be observed: First, that we say to ourselves that we are busily engaged in our duty, and that our duty is God's work. It would be well if we said this not to ourselves only, but to God in one short prayer: "Lord, I am Thy servant, this is Thy will and Thy work; bless me in it for Christ's sake." The second caution is contained in the latter words of the text. The shortness of our own life bids us remember that we are but God's instruments, appointed to labour for a little while on a particular little part of His great work, but that neither its beginning nor its finishing belongs to us, neither can we so much as understand the vastness of its range.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 164.

REFERENCES: ix. 4.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Lent to Passiontide*, p. 367; W. Cunningham, *Sermons from* 1828 *to* 1860, p. 303; D. Fraser, *Metaphors of the Gospels*, p. 305; F. Meyrick, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 208; G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, pp. 43, 67; A. Jessopp, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 160; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 354; T. Gasquoine, *Christian World*

Pulpit, vol. i., p. 342; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 35; vol. x., p. 36; vol. xxviii., p. 121; E. H. Ward, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 318; H. P. Liddon, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 84. ix. 4, 5.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 4th series, p. 179. ix. 6.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 383; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 340.

Chap. ix., vers. 6, 7.—**"When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam," etc.**

If we find that in the exercise of His miraculous power, our Lord in many instances, in a greater or less degree, employs means, the question naturally arises, in what relation do these means stand to the result?

I. Now, in the first place, it is obvious that the means employed, for instance in the miracle related in the text, were of themselves quite inadequate to produce the result by the operation of the ordinary uniform laws of nature. To suppose them so capable would be in fact to eliminate the miraculous altogether.

II. Further, it must be noticed that the means employed by our Lord, although quite inadequate to produce the result, yet seem to have a certain relation of appropriateness to that result. And it is surely more rational to regard them as not indeed either necessary or adequate in themselves to the production of the effect, but yet as real and not merely apparent means tending towards that end, so that the miraculous power may be said in these instances to have been applied in endowing common material things with healing properties which they did not by their own nature possess.

III. In the sacraments, as in the miracles, we have an outward and visible sign, and an inward and spiritual grace, the former being the means by which the latter is conveyed. There are, indeed, two points of distinction between them, which, rightly considered, will only serve to render the parallel more striking. First, the boon conferred by the miracle is itself open and visible, and therefore needs no pledge to assure the recipient of its existence, while the grace of the sacrament is inward and spiritual, and the outward part of the sacrament is thus not only the means by which the grace is bestowed, but also a pledge to assure the faithful they have verily and indeed received it. And secondly, the miracles being isolated and exceptional applications of Divine power, their conditions are governed by

no general law, and it cannot be inferred that in other cases a repetition of the same means will be followed by the same result. On the other hand, the sacraments being given as continued ordinances for man's use during all time as long as the Church is militant here in earth, the supernatural element may be regarded as a permanent and uniform energy, and therefore, if the prescribed conditions, both subjective and objective, are all duly fulfilled, the same result, the same gift of Divine grace, may invariably be expected.

T. H. ORPEN, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Oct. 18th, 1883.

REFERENCES: ix. 6, 7.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 4th series, p. 194. ix. 6-24.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. xvi., p. 122. ix. 8-17.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 228. ix. 8-23.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. v., p. 241. ix. 18-28.—*Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 140. ix. 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1393; D. Cook, *The Dundee Pulpit*, p. 97.

Chap. ix., vers. 24, 25.—**"Then again called they the man that was blind," etc.**

THIS history is of especial interest, because it gives us so completely the history of the spiritual progress of a man who in the day of our Lord's flesh was privileged to be brought into very near connection with Him, and who was one of the first that was permitted to suffer for His sake.

I. Observe then that the first movement of Christ towards this blind man is clearly one of free grace. There is not even so much as a prayer on the part of the blind man for the purpose of moving our Lord's compassion. So we find here an instance of that which is at the root of all true Divinity, namely, the love of God in seeking those who have no eyes to see Him, the coming of the Son of man, not to wait until the lost sheep come back of their own accord to seek Him, but Himself to seek and to save that which was lost.

II. The first step then towards the illumination of the blind man is on the part of Christ, and the second is the demand of an act of faith in return. Christ anoints the man's eyes with clay, but that does not give them sight. The outward sign of the clay is applied, and seen to be inefficient, until faith has taken the man to the pool of Siloam, when by the command of Christ, the blind man washes and remains blind no longer. The man's knowledge of Christ was eminently progressive; it began with an act of grace, even as baptism is granted us freely without our asking for it, and it was continued by an act of faith.

III. The washing in the pool of Siloam was for this man the new birth of water and the Spirit, which fitted him to go on to perfection in the knowledge of Divine mysteries; the blind man had learned by means of his healing, and had been convinced still more clearly by his arguments with the Pharisees, that his healer must be of God, or He could do nothing; he needs only one step further, namely, to be permitted to see in Jesus not merely a man sent from God, but the Son of God Himself. Jesus announced Himself as such; there was quite enough in what had already occurred to make good the assertion; faith seized with joy upon the announcement of the Son of God actually present in the flesh; "Lord, I believe," said the man to whom Christ gave sight, and he showed his faith by worship. The story shows that there is such a thing as spiritual progress, the knowledge of Christ is a growing, an increasing knowledge: to those that have, that improve what has been given to them, more will be given.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 202.

REFERENCES: ix. 24-38.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 163.

Chap. ix., ver. 25.—"**He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.**"

I. THE text points to the extreme importance of having, in religious matters, the witness to the truth of God within ourselves. There are three easily conceivable attitudes of mind which we can assume with respect to the faith of Christ. We may either accept Christianity by a sort of educational and traditional habit, because we were taught to believe it in our childhood, and because we have never, since then, seen any particular reason for maintaining a contrary opinion; or we may accept it, because we have subjected it, together with its antagonistic systems, to the process of a careful examination and scrutiny, and have found that it satisfies our intellectual requirements in a way which every other system has failed to do. Or yet again, we may accept it, partly perhaps for both of the above reasons, but more than all because, having brought our hearts and lives into contact with the truth which it proclaims, we have felt the power and realized the comfort which they are able to bestow. This last may be called the "experimental," the first two being respectively the "notional" and the "intellectual" modes of belief. Now it is perfectly clear that of the three modes of Christian belief, the last is the only one

which will bear any amount of strain and stress that may happen to be put upon it.

II. If I am a Christian from custom and habit, my Christianity is liable to be endangered by many of the adverse influences which are sure to encounter it, as I pass on through life. It will provide me with no security in the hour of temptation. It will fortify me with no principle, and raise me to no height of moral elevation. And if I am a Christian simply from force of reasoning—even then I shall be at the mercy of every antagonist who comes with greater power of intellect than I possess, and with greater display of reasoning, to assail my position. I hold my faith by a merely temporary tenure. We are not safely placed unless our religion is of a personal, experimental character. We may be beaten in argument by a cleverer man, or by one who is better trained in disputation than we are; but no power whatever can argue you out of facts.

G. CALTHROP, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1016.

REFERENCES: ix. 25.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 145; W. M. Punshon, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 85; H. P. Hughes, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 193.

Chap. ix., ver. 29.—"We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is."

TRUTHS temporary and truths eternal. The arguments of the Pharisees, both as regards miracles, and as regards the suspicion with which we should look on a doctrine opposed to the settled opinions of our lives, have in fact, in both cases, a great mixture of truth in them; and it is this very mixture which we may hope beguiled them, and also beguiles those who in our own days repeat their language.

I. For most certain is it that the Scripture itself supposes the possibility of false miracles. The case is specially provided against in Deuteronomy. The Pharisees might have said "Here is the very case foreseen in the Scriptures; a prophet has wrought a sign and a wonder, which is at the same time a breach of God's commandments. God has told us that such signs are not to be heeded, that He does but prove us with them to see whether we love Him truly, knowing that where there is a love of Him, the heart will heed no sign or wonder, how great soever, which would tempt it to think lightly of His commandments. Shall we say then that this is not a just interpretation of the passage in Deuteronomy? Shall we say that this is the language of unbelief or of sin? Or rather, shall

we not confess that it is in accordance with God's word, and holy, and faithful, and true." And yet this most just language led those who used it to reject one of Christ's greatest miracles, and to refuse the salvation of the Holy One of God.

II. The error lies in confounding God's moral law with His law of ordinances; precisely the same error which led the Jews to stone Stephen. This is the difference between positive ordinances and moral laws; the first serve their appointed number of generations by the will of God, and then are gathered to their fathers and perish; the latter are by the right hand of God exalted, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The practical conclusion is, that whilst we hold fast, with an undoubting and unwavering faith, all truths which by their very nature are eternal, and to deny which is no other than to speak against the Holy Ghost, we should listen patiently, pass no harsh judgment on those who question other truths not necessarily eternal, while they declare that they are, to the best of their consciences, seeking to obey God and Christ.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 250.

REFERENCES: ix. 31.—J. Keble, *Sermons for Sundays after Trinity*, Part I., p. 468; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 145. ix. 32.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1065. ix. 35.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 179; Bishop Stubbs, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 49.

Chap. ix., vers. 35, 36.—**"Jesus said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"**

THIS is the very question which Jesus still puts to the conscience of every man, and on the answer given to it does the salvation of every man still depend. How often also is the answer which our hearts would return, the very same with that which was made by the blind man to Christ: "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"

I. First, let us see what the question means. It is plain that it means more than a mere nominal belief, like that of a person who had learnt his creed by heart, and had been told in his childhood who Christ was, without having in after life thought about Him at all, and yet without having his old belief overthrown, so that, if he should be put in mind, he would still possess it. Such a belief on the Son of God is no belief at all. We know that the belief spoken of in the text is a true and lively assurance that Christ is indeed the Son of God, from

whom we shall receive our eternal sentence of happiness or misery, according as we please Him or no; and any man who does hold such an assurance strongly cannot easily avoid being influenced by it in his conduct.

II. There are many who, in a very strict sense, may be said not to know who the Son of God is: (1) Those who consider Him as a great prophet, but are never led to regard Him with that faith and love and adoration which His character, as revealed in the Scriptures, demands. (2) A second class of persons, who do not know the Son of God, consists of those to whom the expression of the Apostle, that we walk by faith and not by sight, appears, if they would confess the truth, utterly wild and unreasonable. Many of these men attend church, express their belief in the Gospel, and not unfrequently lament and condemn the progress of infidelity. This they do not out of pretence, but thinking themselves very sincere; they have a respect for Christianity, and they propose to themselves, when they think of such things, to profit from its rewards hereafter. But if those labourers in the parable, who were called early in the morning, had passed the day in idleness, resolving to begin their work at the eleventh hour, they would in vain have asked for the wages of their labour. If we live by sight, we must not expect to die by faith. T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 146.

REFERENCES: ix. 35, 36.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1088. ix. 35-38.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 623, *Ibid.*, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 58; J. R. Harington, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 211; Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Oxford University Herald*, June 20th, 1885; W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, vol. i., p. 51. ix. 38.—W. F. Hook, *Sermons on the Miracles*, vol. ii., p. 119. ix. 39.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1798; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 27. *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 261; vol. xix., p. 303; F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 259. ix. 41.—S. Baring Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 8. ix.—G. Macdonald, *The Miracles of Our Lord*, p. 61. x. 1-10.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 273.

Chap. x., ver. 3.—"He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

I. THERE is no difficulty in the general interpretation of the language of the text. Christ has a personal knowledge of His disciples of the most complete and intimate kind, calling each by name, treating him as an individual, according to the nature he possesses and the actual circumstances of his life. What, without exaggeration, may be called a personal friendship, is

established between the Lord and each of His disciples. By how few is this truth realised and fully accepted as true for himself, in his own daily life! You can understand how He might name your name in condescension, or in pity, or in reproof; but how He should name your name in pure warm-hearted love—in love to you, to your own very self, as cherishing a real, heartfelt, personal attachment to you,—that altogether baffles your comprehension, because you feel that there is nothing in you which is deeply suitable to His love. But He loves the goodness that is begun in you. In one word, He loves the ideal "you," and resolves by His own grace to make it in due time the real "you."

II. The calling and the leading are always united. He calls that He may lead. He utters the name that he, that she, who answers to it may, at the thrilling word, arise and follow Him whithersoever He goeth. There are some who wait for the calling, who listen eagerly for the sound of the name, and who would be more than satisfied to hear it spoken in kindness by the Shepherd every day, but who are far from having any corresponding readiness to accept the leading of the Shepherd. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out"—out, of course, from the whole natural sinful life, from all its darkness and misery, into the light and joy of acceptance; out of infantine feebleness into manly strength; out of narrow views into wider; out of mistakes and disappointments into wiser ways and better fortunes; out of besetting sin into waiting duty; sometimes out of safety into perils which lie on the way to a higher safety; and so on and on in a movement which cannot cease until at length, in His own time and way, it will be out of earth into heaven.

A. RALEIGH, *The Little Sanctuary*, p. 44.

Chap. x., ver. 4.—**"And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice."**

CHRIST the Shepherd of His people.

I. Christ goes before His people in the path of holy obedience.

II. He goes before them in the path of suffering and tribulation.

III. He goes before them to the grave.

IV. He goes before them to the judgment.

V. He goes before them to glory.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 196.

REFERENCES: x. 4.—J. Duncan, *The Pulpit and Communion Table*, p. 371. *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 242. x. 7-9.—*Clergyman's*

Magazine, vol. iv., p. 225. x. 7-19.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 221. x. 8.—J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 210. x. 9.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ii., p. 125; J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat*, p. 25; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 354; *Ibid., My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 148; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 166; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 274; vol. xix., p. 299; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 6th series, p. 263; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 323; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iv., p. 356. x. 9-11. —D. Fraser, *Metaphors of Gospels*, p. 316.

Chap. x., ver. 10.—**"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."**

I. THE gift of the Spirit of life dwells in those who are united to Christ in a fulness more abundant than was ever revealed before. And the gift of life is not a power, a principle, but a very true Person dwelling in us. This is the regeneration for which all ages waited till the Word was made flesh—the new birth of water and of the Spirit, of which the baptism of Christ is the ordained sacrament. Here, then, we see a part of this great promise. In one word, it is the fulness of life given to us by the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost, which Christ by His indwelling has bestowed upon us.

II. And besides this, the gift of life is abundant, not only in its fulness, but in its continuance. We cannot die in our Head, because He is life eternal; nor can we die in ourselves, except we cast out the Giver of life who is in us. Our first head fell, and drew us with him into the grave; our second Head is in heaven, and "our life is hid with Him in God." We can die no more by any federal death, but only by our own several and personal death. If sinners die eternally, they die one by one, of their own free choice, even as Adam. And we die now no more by single acts of disobedience, but only by a resolved and deliberate course of sinning. This reveals to us the wonderful love and miraculous longsuffering of Christ, and of the Spirit who dwells in us. Where once He enters, there He abides with divine endurance.

Let us draw from what has been said one or two practical truths of great importance in our daily life. (1) And, first, we hereby know that in all our acts there is a Presence higher than our own natural and moral powers. We were united to Christ by the presence of the Holy Spirit from our baptism. There has never been a moment, from the first dawn of consciousness, from the first twilight of reason and the first motions of the will,

when the Spirit of life has not been present with us. The working of the Spirit is, so to speak, co-extensive with our whole moral being. He presides over all the springs of thought, word and deed, by His gracious presence endowing us with power and will to mortify sin and to live in holiness. What, then, is our life but the presence of the Spirit dwelling in us? (2) Another plain and practical truth is, that this Presence works in us according to the revealed and fixed laws of our probation. (3) Lastly, we may learn that the union of this Divine Presence with us in our probation issues in the last and crowning gift of this life—the gift of perseverance. "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it."

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 159.

ABUNDANT Life.

Assuming inequalities of power to reign through every department of life, from the lowest to the highest, what I gather from Jesus' words is this, that God is not satisfied with any lower form of vitality where a higher can be attained, and that it has been one design of the Gospel to intensify human life, if I may so say, through every region of it; not to damp, impair or enfeeble a man's life-powers at all, but on every side to exalt them. The Son of God visited us in our far-off and, spiritually speaking, half-dead world, to make ours a more abundant life, as though He had come to bring a spiritual sunshine with Him, or had swept us with Himself into the regions of eternal day.

I. First of all, I think this has come true even in the ordinary and natural experiences of men. The effect of Christianity has not been to deaden men to the interests of this life, with its common joys and sorrows, but, on the contrary, to render our earthly life larger and more intense. The world itself is surely a graver, vaster thing since Jesus Christ died upon it. Common business rises in importance when by it you have the task set you to glorify your Saviour and serve your brother men. Our little life, obscure or petty as it may be, is no longer as a land-locked lake, set by itself apart; but, lo! it is an inlet, with open channel uniting it to the awful ocean beyond, and into it also there pour day after day those mysterious tides of life and passion which come from the infinite heart of the most high and loving One.

II. In the second place, Jesus Christ makes life to His disciples a more abundant thing by conferring upon us a new sort of life, and one which has fuller pulses and a deeper and stronger vitality about it than merely natural or unregenerate men can

possess. The experiences of Christian—that is, spiritual life—are more intense than those of nature, because they are awakened in the new-born soul by a far grander and more mighty class of of facts and relationships; eternity is vaster than time, God mightier than the world. Unregenerate men touch time and the world; we, if we are Christ's, touch God and eternity. A man's conversion to God adds a fresh region, a new department, to his being; it gives him new thoughts, it quickens in him new emotions, it begets new motives, it sets before him new ambitions. The new life must be a fuller one, a deeper one, than the old, giving birth to thoughts more grave, feelings more deep,— in a word, "life more abundant."

J. OSWALD DYKES, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 177.

REFERENCES: x. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1150; J. F. Stevenson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 388; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 340; C. Short, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 261; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 65; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 302; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 130; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvii., p. 237; G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 93; F. Tucker, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 606; E. Mellor, *In the Footsteps of Heroes*, p. 172; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 423.

Chap. x., ver. 11.—"I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

THE Shepherd of our Souls.

In those countries of the East where our Lord appeared, the office of a shepherd is not only a lowly and simple office, and an office of trust, as it is with us, but moreover, an office of great hardship and of peril. Our flocks are exposed to no enemies such as our Lord describes. The shepherd here has no need to prove his fidelity to the sheep by encounters with fierce beasts of prey. The hireling shepherd is not tried. But where our Lord dwelt in the days of His flesh it was different. There it was true that the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

I. From the time of Adam to that of Christ a shepherd's work has been marked out with special Divine favour, as being a shadow of the Good Shepherd who was to come. The shepherds of old time were such as Jacob, Moses and David—men at once of peace and of war; men of simplicity indeed, "plain men living in tents"; the "meekest of men," yet not easy, indolent men, sitting in green meadows and by cool streams, but men of rough duties, who were under the necessity to suffer, while they had opportunity to do exploits. And if such were the figures, how much more was the Truth itself, the Good

Shepherd, when He came, both guileless and heroic. Jacob endured, Moses meditated, and David wrought. Christ, too, not only suffered with Jacob and was in contemplation with Moses, but fought and conquered with David. Jacob was not as David, nor David as Jacob, nor either of them as Moses; but Christ was all three, as fulfilling all types—the lowly Jacob, the wise Moses, the heroic David—all in one, Priest, Prophet and King.

II. Christ is our Shepherd, and His sheep know His voice. Let us beware of not following when He goes before. Let us not be content with ourselves; let us not make our own hearts our home, or this world our home, or our friends our home; let us look out for a better country, that is, an heavenly. Let us look out for Him who alone can guide us to that better country; let us call heaven our home, and this life a pilgrimage; let us view ourselves as sheep in the trackless desert, who, unless they follow the shepherd, will be sure to lose themselves, sure to fall in with the wolf.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 230.

OF all the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, there are none more deeply engraven in the mind of the Church, none more dear to her than these. This is one of the Divine sayings in which there is so much of truth and love, that we seem able to do little more than to record it and ponder on it, to express it by symbols, and to draw from it a multitude of peaceful and heavenly thoughts. Let us, then, consider the surpassing and peculiar goodness of the One True Shepherd.

I. And this He has revealed to the world by His voluntary death. There was never any other but He who came down from heaven, that He might lay down His life for the sheep. While we were yet enemies, Christ died for us, "that He might gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad."

II. Again, His surpassing goodness is shown in the provision He has made of all things necessary for the salvation of His flock in this state of mortality and sin. There can no soul fail of eternal life, of reaching the rest of the true fold in heaven, except by his own free will. As the blood-shedding of the Good Shepherd is a full and perfect ransom for all His flock, so has He pledged the perpetual exercise of His unseen pastoral care, to give us all that is needed for our salvation. (1) And for this He has provided, first of all, in the external foundation

and visible perpetuity of His Church. He has secured it by the commission to teach all nations, by the universal preaching of His apostles, by shedding abroad the Holy Ghost, by the revelation of all truth, by the universal tradition of the faith in all the world. For the perpetuity of the Church, He has pledged His Divine word that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" and in this He has provided for the perpetuity both of truth and grace. What the Church does on earth, it does in His power and name; and He, through it, fulfils His own shepherd care. This, then, is the external ministration of His goodness. (2) But once more. His love and care are shown, not only in the external and visible provision which He thus made beforehand for the perpetual wants of His flock, but in the continual and internal providence wherewith He still watches over it. When He says, "I know My sheep by name," He means that there is nothing in them which He does not know; there is not one forgotten, not one passed over, as He telleth them morning and evening. His eyes are upon us all. And all the complex mystery of our spiritual being, all our secret motions of will, our daily sorrows, fears, and thoughts, are seen and read with the unerring gaze of our Divine Lord. So let us follow Him now "whithersoever He goeth." Be our path through joy or sorrow, in the darkness or in the light, let us follow on to the fold which is pitched upon the everlasting hills; where the true flock shall "pass under the hand of Him that telleth them one by one, till all the lost be found and all His elect come in.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 1.

WHEN our Lord calls Himself the Good Shepherd, is He using a title which has lost its value since He has ceased to live visibly upon earth, or has this title a true meaning for us Christians—for you, for me, at the present day?

I. Here we cannot but observe that, writing some forty years after the ascension, St. Peter calls Jesus Christ the Shepherd, as well as the Bishop of Souls; and St. Paul calls Him the Great Shepherd of the sheep. And in the earliest ages of the Christian Church, when the cruel stress of persecution drove the faithful from the streets and public places of Rome down into those catacombs which were burrowed out beneath the busy life of the vast pagan city, there was one figure above all others which, in the depths of their dark prison homes, Christians delighted to draw in rude outline upon the vaults, beneath

which they prayed. It was the figure of the Good Shepherd. And ever since those days of persecution, when Christ has been asked to bless from His throne some work of mercy for relieving suffering, or for teaching the ignorant, or for delivering the captive, or for raising the fallen, it has been as the Great Shepherd of Christians—the Good Shepherd of humanity.

II. Let us briefly reflect what this truth involves as to our relations with our Redeemer. (1) As the Good Shepherd, He knows His sheep. He knows us individually; He knows all about us. It is because He knows us thus perfectly that He is able to help us, to guide us, to feed us—if we will, to save us; ay, to the very uttermost. (2) And besides this knowledge, He, the Good Shepherd, has a perfect sympathy with each of us. He is not a hard guardian, who sets Himself to keep us in order without any bit of feeling for our individual difficulties. He is touched, as His Apostle says of Him, with a feeling of our infirmities. Nothing that affects any one of us, is a matter of indifference to His tender heart. (3) Above all, as the Good Shepherd, the Christ, He is disinterested. He gains nothing by watching, by guarding, by feeding such as we. We can contribute nothing to His majestic glory. He seeks us for our own sakes, not for His. H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 575.

I. CONSIDER this subject, first of all, in its widest possible range. The vast family in heaven and earth, all created being, is under His guidance as the risen and exalted Redeemer. Not only has He created all things, not only does He uphold all things by the word of His power; but, by virtue of redemption, He exercises a peculiar and special government over all things. However little we may be able to enter into the meaning of such a closer relationship being established by redemption, of the fact itself there can be no doubt. Our blessed Lord has become, in a closer sense than before, the guide and overseer and shepherd of the vast and innumerable flock of created beings, since He was born at Bethlehem, since He was crucified on Calvary, since He rose triumphant over death and hell, and was received up into glory. The Christian claims for His own Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, the lordship and rule over all the chances and changes of human affairs, and the ordering of the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, to the furtherance of His own high and glorious purposes.

II. We have advanced thus far; but it is plain that, so far from exhausting, we have not even yet approached the full and

proper meaning of the term "Shepherd," and the office thus designated. Christ rules and orders the universe, and thus He may be said to be its Shepherd; He governs and arranges the nations and events of the world, and, so far, He may be said to be its Shepherd; but there is a sense even closer than any of these, in which our risen and ascended Saviour is the Good Shepherd; in which all the tenderness of that character, all the individual nearness, all the constant personal vigilance felt and leaned on, may be filled up and realised. Let us note His pastoral care of His people, and the consequent condition of and effect on themselves. (1) He is their Almighty Shepherd. (2) He is an ever-watchful Shepherd. (3) He is a tender and compassionate Shepherd. (4) He is an all-wise Shepherd. Lie still, then, little flock, assured by His almightiness, guarded by His watchfulness, rooted in His sympathy, and safe in His unerring wisdom. Seek no other shepherd, for He is all-sufficient. Question Him not, nor distrust Him. However unpromising life may be, He will bring out of it blessing and joy; for thus saith the Lord God, "Behold I, even I, will both search My sheep and seek them out."

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermon*, vol. vi., p. 226.

OUR Saviour mentions three evidences, which He gave to entitle Him to the name of the Good Shepherd. And

I. He says, "I know My sheep." The Lord Jesus not only knows the number of His great flock, but His acquaintance is so close and intimate, that "He calleth His own sheep by name."

II. "I am known of Mine." We speak of knowing an earthly friend, not because his name, his position, his character, or his occupation, are known, but because we have tested his sincerity, his liberality, his affection. So, too, in regard to the knowledge which Christians have of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. The third proof which Jesus gives that He is the Good Shepherd, is the most convincing one of all: "I lay down My life for the sheep." He entered the sheepfold by the same door with them; and, having led them through the gate of death, He will go before them also through the gate of the resurrection, to the better land beyond. J. N. NORTON, *Golden Truths*, p. 171.

CHRIST is the Good Shepherd

I. Because He owns the sheep. He is the proprietor of the flock. It follows naturally, that He would exercise greater vigilance, and risk greater danger, on their behalf. (1) They are His by the gift of the Father. Over and over again in the

course of the Gospels, He gives utterance to this truth: "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." (2) They are His by creative ties. This probably is the deep meaning of the phrase, "His own sheep"—sheep which are His, even before they are called. The anthem of redemption excites reminiscences in the soul of the melody of creation; the Shepherd's voice is not strange, for we have heard it before. The sheep know His voice. (3) They are His also by purchase. He shed His blood, not in His own defence, but for the sake of those whom He came to rescue.

II. Because He knows His sheep. "I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." (1) He knows the sheep by their faces. When a sinner is converted, he is brought face to face with the Saviour; he looks the Saviour in the face, and the Saviour looks him in the face; and He never forgets any face, once He has a full, fair view of it. (2) He knows you by your names. When men are comparative strangers, they surname and master one another; but the Saviour surnames and masters no one. Like the mother, the sister, or the wife, full of tenderness and affection, He calls you by your Christian names. (3) He, furthermore, is perfectly acquainted with your circumstances. (4) This word "know," means something deeper yet; it means thorough, complete apprehension of your deepest character.

III. Because He feeds His sheep. "They shall go in and out and find pasture." They go in first to the fold. This supposes that they shall rest awhile after their weary wanderings in the desert. (2) They shall go out to *graze*. Here is safety and satisfaction.

IV. Because He leads the sheep. He leads them (1) Gently, (2) Safely, (3) Through life and death.

J. C. JONES, *Studies in St. John*, p. 282

REFERENCES: x. 11.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 282; S. Baring Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 154; A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 85; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 301; H. P. Liddon, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 85. x. 11-16.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., pp. 239-241; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 222; vol. iv., p. 224; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. i., p. 195.

Chap. x., ver. 14.—"I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine."

THE True Sheep.

Our Lord here says that He and His sheep know each other; that His knowledge of them is one of the tokens of the Good

Shepherd; and that their knowledge of Him is one of the tokens of the true sheep. Now, what is this knowledge by which His true sheep are known? It is the knowledge of friendship and love. It is something living and personal, arising out of the whole of our inward nature, and filling all our powers and affections. As He knows us, through and through —all that we have been and are, all that we desire and need, hope and fear, do and leave undone, all our thoughts, affections, purposes, all our secret acts, all our hidden life, which is hid with Him in God—so do His true sheep know him; His love, care, tenderness, mercy, meekness, compassion, patience, gentleness, all His forecasting and prudent watchfulness, His indulgent and pitiful condescension. It is the knowledge of heart with heart, soul with soul, spirit with spirit; a sense of presence and companionship; so that when most alone, we are perceptibly least alone; when most solitary, we are least forsaken. Let us consider how we may attain this knowledge.

I. First, it must be by following Him. "My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me." By living such a life as He lived. Likeness to Him is the power of knowing Him: nay, rather, it is knowledge itself—there is no other. It is by likeness that we know, and by sympathy that we learn. If we would only take the Sermon on the Mount and read it, not as the world has paraphrased it, but as He spoke it; if we would only fulfil it, not as men dispense with it, but as He lived it upon earth, we should begin to know somewhat of those deeper perceptions of his love, tenderness, and compassion which are the peace of His elect.

II. And further than this, there are peculiar faculties of the heart which must be awakened, if we would know Him as He knows us. There can be no true obedience without the discipline of habitual devotion. Meditation is the proof of prayer, and prayer is the life of meditation; and they are therefore inseparable.

III. And lastly, this true knowledge of Him is not a transitory state of feeling. Out of obedience and devotion arises an habitual faith which makes Him, though unseen, yet perceptibly a part of all our life. With this we shall not run great risks of deceiving ourselves. This strong and sustained consciousness of His presence makes all things within the veil more real than those we see. The unseen Head of the Church living and glorified; the mystical body knit in one by the Holy Ghost; the Good Shepherd tending His one fold on the everlasting

hills ; the familiar image of His loving countenance ; and these, all day long, in the midst of work and in their hour of rest, at home or abroad, among men or in solitude, are spread before the sight of hearts that know Him by love.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 21.

I. OBSERVE, first, that there is a double knowing spoken of here, and that double knowing is distinctly spoken of in the two clauses, there being two correlative clauses, the one depending upon the other. There is (1) the Shepherd's general knowledge of His flock. He sees them all. They are all before Him. He can tell at a glance whether any are missing. He can tell at a glance whether strangers are in the flock. All are before Him. But (2) there is beyond this a particular knowledge. He calls His sheep by name. Each one in his own personality, each one is before Him as though there were no other in this crowded world. The Shepherd, especially in this land, had this intimate knowledge of his sheep. And this knowledge thus intimate was a knowledge of care and love. It was not a love for humanity ; it was a love for the separate souls of which humanity is made up. His care bosoms itself upon His love for each one.

II. "I am known of Mine." That second is the answering image of the first, as it is cast from Christ upon the heart of man. As there is a general knowledge of all the sheep, so there is a general knowledge of Christ. You all have it. As there is in Him not only the general knowledge, but also the particular knowledge, so there must be in you, not that general knowledge only, but the personal, unworked, unwrought knowledge of Him, if you take to yourself the comfort of being amongst those He loves. And observe how that branches forth. As love is the very characteristic of His knowledge of His own, so love bred of His love is the very characteristic of this personal knowledge of Him—love, that master passion, that to which alone the will of man bows, as the iron casts itself into the liquid stream under the breath of the furnace—that which alone can make the hard heart of fallen humanity break into the stream of obedience ; personal love to Him, the return of His personal love to you, bred of it. "We love Him because He first loved us." "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." There must be this ring concentric within ring, the general knowledge running out into the particular personal knowledge, and that personal knowledge the knowledge of love.

J. MACKARNESS, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 362.

CONSIDER I. Christ's knowledge of us—the Shepherd's knowledge of His sheep. That this knowledge, which passes reciprocally between Christ and believers, is something exceedingly wonderful indeed is evident from the affinity of the line of thought. For these two acts of knowledge are only two links of a chain, which only runs on to other two. And see what these two are. "I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep." There is plainly a balance, there is clearly an argument running up. The knowledge which the Son has of the Father, and which the Father has of the Son, is, and it must be, infinite, beyond conception; because it is the knowledge of a Divine mind. It is the knowledge of an eternity of existence; it is the knowledge of perfect love; it is the knowledge of actual oneness of being; and yet, in a breath with that, Christ says, "I know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." If Christ knows His sheep, it follows (1) that He knows who are His sheep. Leave it to Him to exercise His own prerogative. His knowledge is both collective and individual. Each of us stands out, this day, as much the object of Christ's mind, as known and as loved, as if He had nothing else in the whole universe to care about except His flock, and as if in that flock He had no sheep but you.

II. Observe one or two of the consequences which result from this minute individualising knowledge. Remember, Christ knows, not of, but you, and therefore Christ is always looking upon you in a completeness, *i.e.* with reference to your circumstances; and He will take every little circumstance into consideration. He knows what none else can know: He knows each one's future, and He is always working up to that future; and that future stretches on beyond this world. It is not only that you are being prepared and trained at every step for some path that you are to tread in this life; but you are being prepared for the exact place you are to occupy, and for the exact service you are to render in heaven.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 167.

Chap. x., vers. 14, 15.

THE Shepherd of the Sheep.

Two things come up for consideration in this verse—(1) The good Shepherd in His relation as such; (2) His work.

I. The Shepherd stands in a twofold relation; on the one hand, to Him whose shepherd He is by authoritative appointment, and, on the other hand, to those who are His sheep, by free gift in the gospel, and by personal appropriation in the exercise of faith, wrought in them by the Spirit. (1) The sheep are given to Jesus Christ by the Father; and, as the Father's gift, He knows them. He holds them as a sacred trust, a precious possession. He has them near to Him; He has them in His heart, in His hand. None shall pluck them out of His hand. (2) Jesus knows the sheep as hearing His voice following Him. He cannot but care for them; He cannot but remember them. He knows them by intimate acquaintance with all their infirmities, by sympathy with them in all their sorrows.

II. The work of the good Shepherd. It is His laying down His life for the sheep. (1) Viewing this work in the light of His relation to the Father, we may see in it one chief part, or rather the crowning and culminating instance, the concentrated essence, as it were, of that perfect obedience by which He fulfilled all righteousness. It is all-important thus to regard the one event of the Lord's death and resurrection as the sure sign, the pledge and seal, of the thoroughly good understanding that there is between Him as your shepherd and the Father, whom in that capacity He serves. He is faithful to Him who has appointed Him—faithful for ever to the death. (2) Viewing His death in the light of His relation to the sheep, for whom, in obedience to the Father, He lays down his life, it is to be regarded as forming the principal part, the consummation and essence, of His passive obedience and righteousness—His propitiatory or atoning sacrifice. He lays down His life for the sheep, as not only the obedient servant of the Father, but the representative and surety of the sheep. His life is given freely; it is laid down voluntarily; it cannot be demanded by any right: not by right of judgment, for there is no sin; not by right of conquest, for even when crucified through wickedness He lived by the power of God, and had legions of angels at His command.

R. S. CANDLISH, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 53.

REFERENCES: x. 14.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 276; T. J. Rowsell, *Church Sermons by Eminent Clergymen*, vol. i., p. 379. x. 14, 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1877. x. 15.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 293. x. 15, 16.—H. Platten, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 248. x. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1713; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 314; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 7th series, p. 83.

Chap. x., vers. 17, 18.—"Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again," etc.

CHRIST Comforting Himself.

I. These words, although spoken, it would seem, to an audience, read like a soliloquy. Jesus Christ, we may say, is here heard comforting Himself, comforting Himself with the reflection that some one loves Him, and with the sense of His power, He could not get on without the assurance that He was loved, any more than we can, least of all, perhaps, the richest, finest natures among us. Some persons are constantly craving and crying out for affection, and devote themselves to the task of choosing their utterances, and framing their conduct, with the view of gaining and keeping as much of it as possible; they scheme and fret for you to fondle them, and are mortified and unhappy if you do not. That is small and weak, and that was not Christ; but to be loved was sweet to Him, and the thought that He was loved, contributed to sustain and animate Him in His work.

II. But the Lord Jesus comforts Himself also, you see, with His full possession of power. It is quite natural and legitimate to contemplate with satisfaction our unrecognised worth and quality, and to retire upon it for consolation; to feel the excellence of the gift in us that is not perceived. We may need to do this occasionally, in encountering depreciation and disparagement, in the presence of supercilious and scornful glances, in order to preserve our self-possession and to keep ourselves from fainting.

III. Observe (1) what it was in Christ which called forth the Father's love. God loved Him, He states, because He laid down His life in order that He might take it again: not, mark, simply because He surrendered it, but because of the motive that actuated Him, the object He had in view in making the surrender. That was Christ's grand idea: to die out that He might revive; to be lost, that He might be restored, as the first-born of many brethren, no longer separate and solitary in His filial standing, but influential to gather others into it. (2) The power of Christ. He was capable of taking up and bearing this terrible cross. He was certain, not only that He could bear the cross set before Him, but that He should reap the full, the anticipated fruit of it. And what the secret of it was, He tells us in the words, "This commandment have I received of my Father."

S. A. TIPPLE, *Echoes of Spoken Words*, p. 1.

Victim and Priest.

I. The perfect freedom or voluntariness of Christ's death is most plainly declared by Himself in the words which we have selected for our text. They express the abiding purpose of His life. We measure the strength of anyone's will to suffer, first and most easily, by its deliberate formation and persistent endurance. It is important therefore to see, in the historical evidence of the Gospels, that our Saviour's resolution to lay down His life was neither an impulse, born of excited feeling and liable to fail before calmer thought, nor a thing of necessity for which He was gradually prepared, and to which He was at last shut up through circumstances; but was a habitual purpose quietly contemplated from the very first, steadily kept in view all along; a protracted life-long will which could never be long absent from his mind by night or day, till in the end it grew to be almost a passion, and burst out at times in such words of vehement desire as these: "How am I straitened till it be accomplished."

II. This is not all. To know how strong was Jesus' will to suffer death, we must add a new element: the element of self-determination to die. While resignation was a habitual attitude of his soul, there was always more than resignation; there was choice; there was intention. We are apt, I think, to underestimate the priestly act of Jesus in His passion, by thinking rather of His willingness than of His will to suffer. As the reasonable and acceptable victim, He is willing, He consents. But as the Priest or Sacrificer, He does more; He wills, He offers. Even the martyr's choice of death before sin is less absolute and free by far than the choice of Christ. He was a Martyr; but He was more, a Priest; and offered Himself to His suffering with a perfection of liberty which we most distantly approach by these human parallels, and therefore with an intensity of will which we have no power to measure.

III. The self-sacrificing will of our Victim-Priest was crossed by hindrances from the weakness of the flesh, and it overcame them. Free choice and fixed will triumphed over the last resistance from the flesh, and His strong crying and tears was what the writer to the Hebrews calls it—a sacrificial oblation offered up to Him who could have delivered Him from that great death.

J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 164.

"I have power to take it again." Of the considerations which our Lord's self-resurrection suggests; let us content ourselves with these

I. We are reminded by it what Christianity really and truly means. It is, before all things, devotion to a living Christ,—to a Christ who lives now as energetically as He lived on the morning of the resurrection.

II. Next we see the foundation of our confidence in the future of Christianity. It is based on a risen Christ.

III. Easter brings with it a consolation which no serious Christian will miss. He who could at will resume the life which He had laid down on the cross, can surely quicken at pleasure the bodies which have mingled with the dust, and can reunite them to the spirits with which they were joined from the earliest moments of their existence.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1138.

REFERENCES: x. 17, 18.—T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 199; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 65. x. 18.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 46. x. 22, 23.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 18. x. 22-42.—*Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 106.

Chap. x., ver. 24.—"**Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.**"

THE Godhead of Christ.

There seems to be much in our Lord's manner of teaching to justify this question. Men who have sought to win the world to their side, have ever made the most of their pretentions, and those commissioned by God to do a work for Him in the world have never lost an opportunity of publishing the commission under which they acted. But it was not so with our Divine Master. Search diligently through His teaching and preaching, and how rarely do you find Him asserting that He is the Christ. All that He says is pervaded by this truth, but it does not lie prominently on the surface.

I. Why was it that He did not comply with the request of the Jews? It was because those who made the request, those to whom He spake, could not bear the revelation, because without prepared hearts they were incapable of receiving or believing the truth, because they could not really know the doctrine without seeking to do the will. What is the claim that He would have made upon their faith had He directly answered their enquiry and announced that He was the Christ? He would have demanded that they should have believed Him to be what He was, the very and eternal God; that as the Father is God, so He is God, and this in no secondary or technical sense, but in the fullest and broadest meaning of the words.

II. Whence is it that we so often doubt and hesitate, whether it really is necessary for us to obey all the precepts Christ has left us in the Gospel? Is it not because we have not yet really learnt to know that the Christ whom we worship is God, that He is ever present, marking what we do, and recording all for the day of judgment? Whence is it that the busy occupations of life, buying and selling, and seeking to get gain, are made so absorbing, whilst we feel that calls to devotion and to works of charity can be so easily set aside? It is because in our hearts we regard the world as more solid and substantial than the Gospel, because we have not comprehended what is meant by our communion with Christ as God. Whence is it that men are so overwhelmed by sorrow, loss of friends, shipwreck of fortune, and feeble health? It is because they have not really learnt that it is God's providence which rules the world, that Christ our God orders all things according to the counsels of His will, and that by loving submission all may be made to minister to their everlasting happiness.

R. GREGORY, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 339 (new series).

REFERENCES: x. 27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 995; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 264; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 101. x. 27-29.—F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 274. x. 28.—G. Hadley, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 317; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1056; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 161; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 279. x. 29.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 61; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 408. x. 30.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 525; vol. xv., p. 226. x. 32.—W. M. Taylor, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 86. x. 34-38.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 318. x. 39-42.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 251; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1924. x. 41.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 33; Parker, *The Ark of God*, p. 278. xi. 1.—Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 169. xi. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1518; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 95; Bishop Thorold, *The Yoke of Christ*, p. 3.

Chap. xi., ver. 4.—**"When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."**

THE Christian Uses of Sickness.

I. We do not sufficiently consider sickness in a Christian light. Undoubtedly, the failure of health is, and will ever be, esteemed a misfortune to any man. It would be going counter to the current of nature to attempt to think of it otherwise. But at this point comes in the difference between the man of the world and the Christian. The man of the world looks

upon sickness simply as a misfortune—nothing more. The Christian regards sickness as a misfortune—true, but it is only his infirmity that he thus regards it. He may speak thus, but his faith corrects him as he speaks, and the stronger it becomes, and the more prevalent, the more it will correct him, till he almost ceases to speak and think of sickness as a misfortune; till the current of nature is turned, and the sacred fountain of his thoughts tends upward and flows not with the world.

II. The blessed uses of adversity have been sung and spoken, even by the thoughtful ones of this world, and how much more of them do we Christians know. How often have we seen a man enter into sickness, a giant in the strength of nature, but a babe in grace, and how often has the same man come out of it prostrated indeed, shattered for the world and its uses, but mighty in spiritual achievement, victor of himself, victor of the world. For wonderful are the reminders at such a time, of things lost, past words whose sound has long gone out of mind; the bringing up out of the depths of the memory of hidden knowledge; the life with which dead formalities suddenly become clothed; the divinity which begins to stir amongst long laid up texts; the real conflict with self-deceit and pride in one who has been only talking about such a conflict all his life; the dropping away of exaggerated phrases of self-loathing; and of confidence in God, and the coming, like the flesh of a little child, of real utterances of self-abasement and the first genuine whisperings of Abba Father. To how many of us sickness may be the sanctuary of earth; to how many the vestibule of heaven.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 95.

REFERENCES: xi. 4.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 232; R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 113. xi. 5.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 230; W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 417; A. Mursell, *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 259; J. Keble, *Sermons for Sundays after Trinity*, Part ii., p. 299. xi. 6.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 290. xi. 7, 8.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 348.

Chap. xi., ver. 9.—"Are there not twelve hours in the day?"

I. THE first and most obvious thought which the text presents to us is that of the predestination of life. God has marked out beforehand the length of the life. This was true, first and foremost, of the life of Christ. His day had its twelve hours. In the way in which He walked, He was in daylight till the twelfth hour. It is true of us. God knows exactly the length of our day, and therefore of our hour. The day shall run its

course, whether the season be winter or summer, whether the hour be of thirty minutes or sixty. It is an encouragement—a call to confidence. Be not afraid to go hither or thither at the summons of duty. Be not afraid of snare or terror, of accident or infection. Thy day has its twelve hours. Thou wilt neither add thereto, nor diminish from them.

II. It is a second, and perhaps a less obvious thought, the completeness of life. We must cast away, as Christians, the common measurement of time. Christ's life on earth as a short life. His hour was but of the length of two or three years. God counts not, but weighs the hours. Christ's three years of speech had in them the whole virtue for the world of two eternities. Christ's thirty years of listening were not the prelude only, they were the condition of the three.

III. A third thought, lying not far from the last, is that of the unity of life. God sees the day as one; when God writes an epitaph, He does so in one line, in one of two lines. "He did that which was evil, or, He did that which was good," and his mother's name was this or, that; the indentification is complete, and the character is one, not two, and not ambiguous. There were twelve hours in the man's day, but the day was one.

IV. The distribution of life. God sees it in its unity; He bids us see it rather in its manifoldness; in its variety of opportunity and in its capacity and capability of good. Economise—determine to economise time. Give up something, some fragment, some particle, of one of these twelve hours, to God and Christ, to thy soul and eternity. Do it in the name of God; do it for thy soul's health's sake; it shall not lose its reward.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 145.

Chap. xi., ver. 11.—"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."

THERE seems to me to be contained in these few words one of the most powerful charms in the world to lull the bitterness of death, and to make us anxious to become such as that we may humbly venture to apply them to ourselves. What would we, each of us, give, when our last hour was come, to feel that Christ would so speak of us? "Our friend sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." Yet this is the language in which Christ does speak of every one who has died in His faith and fear—in which He will speak of us, if we do not so live as to shut ourselves out from His salvation.

I. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." The disciples could not understand that by this gentle term He could possibly mean a thing so fearful as death. And in this we are all of us very like the disciples. We talk of another life, when we think of it at a distance, but we have really got but a very little way towards overcoming our fear of death. We fear it very nearly, if not quite as much, as the heathen do. And this is so natural that no mere words will ever get the better of it, unless we put ourselves in time into such a state of mind as may help us to see that the words are really nothing else but simply true. Christ does call the death of His friends a sleep; and we may learn to make our own death such as to deserve the name.

II. Christ comes to awake us out of sleep. The time will seem no longer than the four days which passed before He awakened Lazarus: a thousand years are in His sight as but one day; and when we have once done with earthly time, we may, perhaps, be able in some degree to reckon time as He does. But assuredly, whatever be our state in the interval, we shall have no consciousness of His tarrying; the weariness of expectation, the longings of hope deferred, will have ended then for ever. He comes as in a moment, to awake us out of sleep: to a waking which it is our best wisdom to endeavour humbly to dwell upon, however infinitely our highest aspirations may fall short of its reality. We may now make Christ our friend; nay, He entreats and calls upon us to suffer Him to be so. We may yet so fall asleep in Christ, that we shall assuredly share in the promise which He made to Lazarus. He will come and awake us out of sleep, that we may be where He is for ever.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 198.

THOUGHTS of death are suited to do us good. It is well that we should consider now, while yet life may be granted us, our latter end. It is well, when by any cause, either in the outward look of nature, or from what may happen within our homes, we are called off from taking thought only of present things—of what we shall eat, what we shall drink, wherewithal we shall be clothed—and constrained to face the most distant future; constrained to look into the darkness of the grave, and to question ourselves, each for himself, as to our preparation and as to our readiness to die.

I. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." That is the way in which

Jesus spoke of death. He called it by no harsher word than sleep. Christ cannot mislead us, and He calls the death of His friend *sleep*. Let us not fear to lean upon His words for ourselves, for our companions; let this henceforth be the idea which we attach to death, "Our friend sleepeth." His toil is ended, his sorrows are ended, his pains are ended; he is out of the reach of the miseries of the sinful world. And when we say this, let us carry on our thoughts further. Death is sleep, but sleep implies an awakening. And this awakening, what is it to the Christian but the resurrection—the rising again of our body, the going back of the spirit; the fitting of the whole man to be an inheritor of everlasting life?

II. Note here a lesson (1) of warning, and that is, to be *prepared* for death and judgment—to live now, so that we may be ready at any moment to depart. Be no more putters off, but performers of your Lord's will. Think how any day, any hour, His words may be heard. Think how soon that night cometh in which no work may be done, in which to repent and amend will be no longer possible. (2) A lesson of comfort. At the appointed time Christ will come and awaken His friends, that where He is there also may His true servants be.

R. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 4th series, p. 81.

REFERENCES: xi. 11.—L. Tyerman, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 815. xi. 13-15.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 129. xi. 14.—Bishop Thorold, *The Yoke of Christ*, p. 205. xi. 14, 15—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 585.

Chap. xi., ver. 15.—**"And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."**

FIVE Paradoxes.

In the single verse of our text we find no less than five paradoxes. They are disclosed in the words, but interpreted in the deeds of Jesus Himself. If their force and significance be carefully studied, they will help our understanding of many a mystery in the providential dealings of God.

I. In the life of an intelligent believer gladness sometimes grows out of grief. This is the lowest form of true Christian experience. It means no more nor less than that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, will work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

II. One's advantage is sometimes hid under another's trials. Two inferences may be suggested here. (1) When we are in deepest affliction, it is quite possible our sorrow is sent in some

measure for another's advantage. (2) When others are afflicted, it may possibly be they are suffering for our sakes.

III. Increase of a Christian's sorrow sometimes alleviates it. Lazarus' illness may be taken for a mere annoyance or a vexation; but Lazarus' positive death, especially after we discover that the Lord knew all about it forty-eight hours before, opens our eyes to see Divine wisdom has unflinching hold of the reins. A great sorrow, with a purpose in it, is easier to bear than a smaller one which seems to have no aim now, and promises no benefit hereafter.

IV. In the true believer's experience doubt is sometimes employed to deepen trust. Earthly perplexity is a heavenly discipline. The way to make a careless Christian careful is to increase His cares. The way to render faith confident and unbroken is to make large demands upon it by onsets of trying doubt.

V. Absolute hopelessness and helplessness are the conditions of hope and help. In all our bewildering experiences, while sorrow keeps increasing, Jesus intentionally keeps away, so that our entire reserve of human reliances is used up. When the case becomes utterly desperate, we may be sure He has started for Bethany, and will soon be here for our relief.

C. S. ROBINSON, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 90.

REFERENCES: xi. 15.—T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 220. xi. 16.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 295; J. Foster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 24; W. Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, p. 206. xi. 21.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 140; W. Simpson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 312; J. E. C., Welldon, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 280.

Chap. xi., ver. 21 (with ver. 32).—**"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."**

THE Reason of Christ's Absence.

It seems to me that the language of the two sisters, confirmed as it is by our Saviour's own words, gives us a wonderful glimpse of His human character, and a great insight into the meaning of His miracles of healing.

I. "If Thou hadst been here, our brother had not died." It was quite true, for He could not have helped healing him; He could not possibly have resisted the silent appealing glance of the sick man upon his bed of pain, nor the lowly confident entreaties of the anxious sisters. Far less faith than they possessed had made thousands whole, and He would have been other than Himself if, being there, He had refused to go and see the sick

man, or, if seeing him, He had failed to make him well. So He was obliged to stay away in order that He might not feel obliged to heal him there and then. What a lesson this teaches us as to the use He made of His miraculous powers. What a holy necessity of blessing and healing lay upon Him.

II. If Christ were here, as of old, sickness and bereavement would not be allowed to do their painful necessary work upon us, and death itself would not have liberty to open the gate of paradise to God's beloved. Believe me, this *is* the secret of human sorrow and bereavement; when your dear ones sicken and die before your eyes, it is not that the Master does not *know*, it is not that the Saviour does not *care* for His servant's trouble, His children's grief; it is that, as He was made perfect through suffering, so should we be purified by that chastening of the Lord of which we all stand in need. He stays on purpose at a distance, that we may have the discipline of sorrow now, and that He may work a greater miracle of resurrection for us hereafter.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 267.

THE Sorrowful "If."

Notice:—

I. That the friends of Jesus are not exempted from affliction in the world. If such immunity might have been expected in any case, it surely would have been in that of the members of the Bethany family who so often received and entertained the Lord. In the highest sacrificial sense of the word, no one ever suffered for others as Christ did; but in a lower sense it is true that believers often do suffer for others; and when their benefit is secured thereby, the afflicted ones discover that their sickness has really been for the glory of God, so that they enter in a very real way into the fellowship of the Saviour's sufferings.

II. The friends of Jesus in their affliction turn directly and immediately to Him. In the day of prosperity it may be occasionally difficult to say whether a man is a Christian or not; but when, in time of trouble, he makes straight for Christ, we know then most surely whose he is and whom he serves. Take a note of it, then, and when affliction comes, observe to whom you flee for succour—for that will tell you whether you are, or are not, a friend of Jesus.

III. The response of the Lord comes often in such a way as seems to aggravate the evil. Christ loved the family at Bethany, *therefore* He did not come immediately at their call.

That looks like a *non-sequitur*, but it is the sober truth. He had in store for them a greater kindness than they could have dreamed of; and therefore He delayed till He could confer that upon them. There is nothing for us at such a time but to wait in patient, trustful expectation; but when we get to the end we shall see that there was love in the discipline.

IV. The friends of Jesus have different individualities but a common danger in their sorrow. In all our trials we are prone to lose sight of the universality of God's providence, and to torment ourselves with this unbelieving "if." It proceeds on the principle that the providence of God is not concerned in everything, and it gives to secondary causes a supremacy that does not belong to them. When calamity comes upon you, be sure that it is not because this or that accident prevented relief, nor because the Saviour was not with you, but because it was His will, and His will only, to bring about that which shall be better for you and others than your deliverance would have been.

V. The friends of Jesus have a blessed end to all their sorrows. "Rest in the Lord, therefore, and wait patiently for Him," for the day is coming when you shall be constrained to say, "Because the Lord was with us our trials came upon us, and He brought us safely through them into His wealthy place."

W. M. TAYLOR, *Contrary Winds*, p. 292.

REFERENCES: xi. 21, 32.—R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters and Miscellanies*, pp. 197, 210. xi. 23.—A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 84. xi. 24-26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1799.

Chap. xi., ver. 25.—"I am the resurrection, and the life," etc.

THIS Divine name is a pledge to us of many joys; but chiefly of three Divine gifts.

I. The first is a perfect newness of body and soul. This is a thought of wonder almost beyond conception or belief. Death and the forerunners of death have so fast a hold upon the body; sin and the soils of sin pierce so deep into the soul, that the thought to be one day deathless and sinless seems to be a dream. People believe, indeed, that they shall rise again, not disembodied, but clothed in a bodily form; but do they realise that they shall rise again with their own bodies, in their very flesh, healed and immortal? And yet this is pledged to us. This very body shall be deathless and glorious as the body of His glory when He arose from the dead. And so, too, of the

soul. It shall be still more glorious than the body, even as the Spirit is above the flesh. To be ourselves the subject of this miracle of love and power, to be personally and inwardly restored to a sinless perfection and raised to the glory of an endless life, as if death and sin had never entered, or we had never fallen, is among those things which we almost "believe not for joy." This is the first Divine gift pledged to us by the resurrection of our Lord.

II. Another gift also pledged to us is the perfect restoration of all His brethren in His kingdom. We shall be with Him. We shall behold Him as He is; He will behold us as we are; He in the perfect sameness of His person; we in ours. And they who knew Him after He rose from the dead, and knew each other as they sat in amazement before Him in the morning at the sea of Tiberias, shall they not know each other in the light of His heavenly kingdom? O dull hearts, and slow to believe what He has Himself spoken! "God is not the God of the dead,"—of nameless, obscured, obliterated spirits, of impersonal natures, beings robbed of their identity, spoiled of their consciousness, of blinded eyes, or marred aspects. The law of perfect recognition is inseparable from the law of personal identity.

III. And lastly, this title pledges to us an immortal kingdom. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." When the happiness of this life burns down, who can re-kindle it? The joy of to-day sinks with the sun, and is remembered with sadness to-morrow. All things are fleeting and transient; to see them, we must look behind us. Old friends, old homes, old haunts, old faces, bright days and sweet memories, all are gone. Such is the best the old creation has for man. But the kingdom of the resurrection is before us, all new, all enduring, all Divine; its bliss has no future, no clouds upon the horizon, no fading, no instability. All that we are, by the power of God, we shall be, without cloying or change or weariness for ever.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 342.

WE learn from the text—

I. That this life and the life to come are not two, but one and the same. Death is not the ending of one, and the resurrection the beginning of another, but through all there runs one imperishable life. A river which plunges into the earth is buried for awhile, and then bursts forth more mightily and in a fuller tide, is not two, but one continuous stream. The light

of to-day and the light of to-morrow are not two, but one living splendour. The light of to-day is not quenched at sunset and rekindled at to-morrow's sunrise, but is ever one, always burning broad and luminous in the sight of God and of holy angels. So with life and death. The life of the soul is immortal, an image of God's own eternity. It lives on in sleep; it lives on through death; it lives even more abundantly and with fuller and mightier energy. When we put off our sinful flesh we begin to live indeed. The one endless life of the soul comes forth from its restraint and passes onward to a wider and more kindred world.

II. Another great law here revealed is, that as we die so we shall rise; as there is no new beginning of our life, so there is no new beginning of our character. The stream which buries itself cloudy and turbid shall rise clouded and foul. The waters that pass clear and bright into the earth shall rise from it clear and bright again.

III. We learn further that the resurrection will make each one perfect in his own several character. Our character is our will; for what we *will* we *are*. Our will contains our whole intention; it sums up our spiritual nature. Now this tendency is here imperfect; but it will be there fulfilled. The sinful soul which has here been curbed by outward check, will there break forth into an intensity stretched to the utmost by despair. As lights, when they pass into an atmosphere akin to fire, burst forth into a volume of flame, so the soul, charged with sin, issuing into the abode of anguish, will break forth into the full measure of its spiritual wickedness. So likewise with the faithful; what they have striven to be, they shall be made. Let this, then, teach us two great truths of practice. (1) How dangerous is the least sin we do. Every act confirms some old tendency or develops a new one. (2) How precious is every means of grace as a step in the heavenly stair.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 356.

IN these words Christ says to us: there is in Me a life which, by dying, rises to its perfection; and therefore death is no more death, but resurrection to the fulness of life. In three ways this is true.

I. Our life in Christ is a battle; through death it rises into a victory.

II. Our life in Christ is a hope; by death it rises into its consummation.

III. Our life in Christ is a spiritual fellowship; by death it becomes perfect and eternal. E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 1.

Chap. xi., vers. 25, 26.

I. THERE is in this text something far beyond the general lot of man, or of man's world; here is a conscious act of man's spirit spoken of as the condition of life with Christ, and that state asserted to place a man superior to death and all its power. And this conscious act of man's spirit is faith; believing on Him. This expression "believeth on Me" is one of much depth of meaning. It is quite distinguished from "believing me" merely; I may believe a fellow-man, but I never can believe on a fellow-man. There is involved in the expression, receiving and resting on Christ; believing what Christ says, but so believing it as to cast a man's whole being and energies and sympathies and hopes on and into Christ and His words; so receiving Him, as to live on Him, and to wait on Him, and to hope on Him, and to look for Him, and to have Him for the soul's centre and the chief desire and object in life. Now to those who thus receive Christ, He is the Resurrection and the Life. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die," *i.e.*, they who believe on Me here on earth, in them is begun a glorious life, which, though they must pass through natural death by the common sentence of all flesh, shall not by that be interrupted or brought to an end, but shall continue through in spite of that natural death, so that they shall never die, but live for ever.

II. What kind of life is this of which these glorious words are spoken. Is it the life of the body? Doubtless it is. These frames, so fearfully and wonderfully made, shall not perish. They shall moulder away into dust, but God shall build them up again; freed from sin and sorrow and pain, they shall live for ever. Is it the life of the mental faculties, the judgments, the feelings, the affections? Doubtless it is. But above all, this life here spoken of is the life of the Spirit. The life of the body the natural man lives; the life of the mind and affections the worldly man lives; but the life of the Spirit no man lives, but they who have been born again by the operation of the Holy Spirit of God working in them through faith in Christ. The resurrection life inherent in our risen Saviour is imparted to all who believe in Him, so that through death they shall live; and even though subject to what men call death, they shall never die.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 285.

COMFORT for Mourners.

The intention of our Lord in this passage was so plainly to to make an immediate comfort out of that which is generally held as a prospective joy, the expressions are so strong, and the idea is so exceedingly high and wonderful, that it is as important as it is difficult to get at the exact sense of the passage. Life and death are both very deep mysteries. We can only go a very little way; but both the language which our Lord used, and the mighty words by which He illustrated, have a meaning, and we must try to read it.

I. Christ, then, lays down two great bases, "I am the resurrection,"—whatever rises, rises in Me. That is the first. And then I am more than the resurrection; I am that which follows the resurrection, that which makes the resurrection; I am the life. The life is greater than the resurrection, even as the end is greater than the means by which that end is attained. Of the resurrection, properly so-called, the resurrection of the body, Christ does not say any more. But he follows on and expands the word "life" as the higher and conclusive thought. When a man really believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, an act of union takes place between Christ and his soul. That union is life. Over that life death has no power; because there is no dividing principle, there is no death. And so we arrive at it, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

II. Now let us see how this affects those whom we call, but who are not, dead. Say they were once joined to Christ, and say that you are joined to Christ. Then, neither of the great relationships in which they once stood can be severed. They cannot die to God; they cannot die to you. Otherwise, Christ's words are extravagant; they lead the mind astray; they mock us. What then is the death of those we love? What we make it. It may be a wretched sense of parting and absence, a severance of everything, a rending of the most sacred ties, an utter desolation. It may be as if they were only just out of sight, occupying a higher range, ever ready to appear, never far off, not a link broken, interested in us and we interested in them, doing the very same work, sunning ourselves in the very same love, living for the very same objects. Do not say they *were* so tender, but say they *are*—they are His and they are mine.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 278.

REFERENCES: xi. 25, 26.—F. W. Hook, *Sermons on the Miracles*, vol. ii., p. 156; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 251

xi. 26.—J. B. Paton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 52; F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 300; L. Mann, *Life Problems*, p. 18; W. Brookfield, *Sermons*, p. 117; W. Morley Punshon, *Sermons*, p. 22. xi. 26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1568; *Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 310; J. Kennedy, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 225. xi. 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1198; W. Hay Aitken, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 179; J. Morgan, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 81; S. R. Macduff, *Communion Memories*, p. 151. xi. 29.—S. Baring Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii.; *Appendix*, p. 29.

Chap. xi., ver. 32.—**"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."**

THERE is in these words—

I. A consciousness of Divine power and mastery. There is no lingering doubt about our Lord's Divine power. It is admitted in the term Lord, and in this unhesitating confession of His Kingship over death. The sisters realised that He was able to save, even from death. Not even the empire of the grave lay outside His royal dominion; they were sure of that.

II. A conception given us of the character of Christ. Not merely was Jesus conceived of as the powerful one, but, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, Thy *love* to us would not have let Lazarus die." This was no hasty supposition. They had seen no love in all human life like that of the Son of man; when He returned at evening, they would hear Him speak of the world's sickness, disease and sorrow, and of the unrest and sadness and care of men; and how He had healed them all. Both the sisters believed in Christ's great love, and they thought, as we too often think, that His love would give immunity from death.

III. A common mistake concerning the presence of Christ, "If Thou hadst been *here*." Christ is always here. No need of a priest to bring Him to an altar. In the simple meeting-place, where two or three village labourers are gathered together for prayer; in the upper room of the humblest lodging; out on the wild, melancholy sea; in the still room, where death seems for the time to be so cruel a king—there is Christ. Make not the sister's mistake, "Lord, if Thou hadst been *here*, my brother had not died."

IV. A conception given us of the graduation of Faith. It is a thing of degree. There are degrees in the best, the noblest, the strongest faith. And how tenderly Christ deals with us, we may learn from His treatment of these sisters. Learn that the way to have more faith is to have some faith.

V. A conception of the wisdom of Christ. Why did He wait? If consolation is delayed, there is wise reason for it, be sure of that. True life is not given without pain. If Christ had gone to the sisters at once, the deniers of miracle in every age would have raised the Sadducean cry, that it was natural strength, a sort of recuperative power in a slumbering Lazarus. Had He been *there*, as the sisters so ardently desired Him to be, the Church of all ages would have lost one of the richest and most glorious of testimonies, such as the resurrection of Lazarus gives, to Christ's kingship over death.

W. M. STATHAM, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 49.

NOTE—

I. The strangeness of Christ's delay to interpose against death. Consider (1) what death is to the sufferer. (2) What a bereavement death is to the survivors. (3) What a reproach death has furnished to the enemies of Christ. (4) Christ is fully aware of our need, and we cannot doubt His desire to interpose.

II. Some of the reasons for Christ's delay which may be found in this history. (1) One reason is that His friends, when dying, may learn confidence in Him, and have an opportunity of showing it. (2) Another reason is that, in the midst of death, the union of sympathy between Christ and His friends is perfected. (3) By delaying to interpose against death, God makes this a world of spiritual probation. (4) He brings in thereby a grander final issue. The wisdom with which He chooses His time makes His delay not callous nor cruel, but considerate of our best interests in withholding for a while that He may bless us at last with an overflowing hand.

J. KER, *Sermons*, p. 266.

Chap. xi., vers. 34-36.—"Jesus said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews Behold! how He loved him" etc.

WHAT led our Lord to weep over the dead, Who could at one word restore him; nay, had it in purpose so to do?

I. First of all, as the context informs us, He wept from very sympathy with the grief of others. We cannot see God's sympathy, and the Son of God, though feeling for us as great compassion as His Father, did not show it to us while He remained in His Father's bosom. But when He took flesh and appeared on earth, He showed us the Godhead in a new manifestation. He invested Himself with a new set of attributes,

those of our flesh, taking unto Him a human soul and body, in order that thoughts, feelings, affections, might be His, which could respond to ours, and certify to us His tender mercy. The tears of men touched Him at once, as their miseries had brought Him down from heaven. His ear was open to them, and the sound of weeping went at once to His heart.

II. But next, we may suppose that His pity, thus spontaneously displayed, was led forward to dwell on the various circumstances in man's condition which excite pity. It was awakened, and began to look around upon the miseries of the world. What was it He saw? He saw visibly displayed the *victory of death*; a mourning multitude—everything present which might waken sorrow except him, who was the chief object of it. He was not—a stone marked the place where he lay. Here was the Creator surrounded by the works of His hands, who adored Him indeed, yet seemed to ask why He suffered what He had Himself made to be so marred. Here, then, were abundant sources for His grief, in the contrast between Adam, in the day in which he was created, and man as the devil had made him.

III. Christ was come to do a deed of mercy, and it was a secret in His own breast. All the love which He felt for Lazarus was a secret from others. He had no earthly friend who could be His confidant in this matter; and as His thoughts turned on Lazarus, and His heart yearned towards him, was He not in Joseph's case, who, not in grief, but from the very fulness of his soul, and his desolateness in a heathen land, when his brethren stood before him, "sought where to weep," as if his own tears were his best companions, and had in them a sympathy to soothe that pain which none could share? Is there any time more affecting than when you are about to break good news to a friend who had been stricken down by tidings of ill?

IV. This marvellous benefit to the forlorn sisters—how was it to be attained? At His own cost. Christ was bringing life to the dead by His own death. This, doubtless, among a multitude of thoughts unspeakable passed over His mind. He felt that Lazarus was wakening to life at His own sacrifice; that He was descending into the grave which Lazarus left. Contemplating there the fulness of His purpose, while now going about a single act of mercy, he said to Martha, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," etc.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p, 128.

Chap. xi., ver. 35.—"Jesus wept."

I. We hardly know a statement of greater comfort than that of our text, and the account of Christ's sorrowing over the impenitent Jerusalem. The Christian mourner would be scarcely able to dry his tears if he must believe that Christ had never shed tears, and he would not comparatively be comforted by the gracious words "Weep not," if he did not find in the narrative of the raising of Lazarus, such words as these, "Jesus wept." We can hardly fail to be conscious of the testimony of the tears of the Redeemer to the human tenderness with which He was fraught. A man, with all a man's sympathy, all a man's compassion, all a man's yearnings, stood revealed, so as to forbid for ever our doubts as to His fellow-feeling with us; for it was with bitter tears of sorrow that He wept as He beheld the city; so that, as He approached Jerusalem, just as when He stood at the grave of Lazarus, the record is not, Jesus was angry, Jesus was proud; but simply "Jesus wept."

II. I know nothing so appalling as the tears of Christ. They are not so much the gentle droppings of pity as evidence wrung from a disquieted spirit, that nothing more could be done for the unbelieving. He would save them if He could, but He cannot. The case has become hopeless, beyond even the power which had raised the dead, yea, built the universe. And therefore He weeps. He weeps to show that it is not want of love, but that He knew the Divine vengeance must be left to take its course.

III. We ought to learn from Christ's tears the worth of the soul. It was not, in all probability, so much over the temporal, as over the spiritual misery which was coming on Jerusalem, that Christ bitterly sorrowed. His tears tell the mightiness of the catastrophe, to express whose fearfulness the whole of nature might become vocal and yet not furnish a cry sufficiently deep and pathetic. And whilst on earth Christ wept twice; in each case it was over the loss of the soul. Let sinners be no longer indifferent towards themselves. Throw not away as of no worth those souls which He feels to be so precious that He must weep for them, even when He cannot save them.

H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1740.

I. Jesus wept in sympathy with others. (1) It is not sinful to weep under bereavement; (2) The Christian mourner may always count upon the sympathy of Jesus. (3) When our friends are mourning we should, like Jesus, weep with them.

II. Turn your attention to the tears of pity dropped by Jesus over the Holy City. (1) Note the responsibility of privilege. (2) Mark the pity of the Redeemer for the lost.

III. At Gethsemane the Redeemer's tears were those of suffering. (1) Christians should expect suffering. (2) Let us learn in suffering the benefit of prayer.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 364. (See also *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 92.)

REFERENCES: xi. 35.—D. Swing, *American Pulpit of the Day*, p. 271; H. Melvill, *Voices of the Year*, vol. i., p. 119; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 104; W. Skinner, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 217; J. B. Heard, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 67; W. M. Taylor, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 87; W. Smith, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. i., p. 434. xi. 35, 36.—L. Mann, *Life Problems*, p. 1; F. W. Robertson, *The Human Race and Other Sermons*, p. 108.

Chap. xi., vers. 38, 39.—"**Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it!**" etc.

I. THE general truth which is symbolically taught through such a miracle as the raising of Lazarus, is the truth that man's natural state is a state of moral death; and that to Christ alone must we look if we would be restored to moral life. In going towards the grave that He might summon forth the dead, our Lord exhibited Himself as appointed for the quickening of the world. The sepulchred body represented the spiritual condition of men; and the life-giving utterance betokened that through Him they might rise from their graves.

II. There can be no life communicated to the tenant of the sepulchre except through the Divine utterance, "Come forth," but there is a previous Divine command to which obedience must be rendered, "Take away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre." You cannot convert yourself; but you may be diligent in the use of means and the removal of hindrances. God requires that you take away the stone, every stone which you have power to move, though He could as easily evoke you from a sepulchre closed, as from a sepulchre opened. It is, so to speak, the test to which He puts you; and by which He determines whether or no you have any sincere desire to be brought out of darkness into marvellous light.

III. The word which set Lazarus free from the power of the grave, might also have set him free from the raiment of the grave; but the miracle was strictly confined to what was beyond natural means, and will not interfere with what was within them.

Evil habits are the grave clothes, fastened with a cordage, than which there is none more difficult to loosen. The command which follows the restoration to life is still "Loose him and let him go." It is a command to those around, just as was that for the removing of the stone, seeing that believers are both required and expected to do much towards aiding the new convert to renounce all unrighteousness. But it is a command also to the convert himself. He has his part in taking away the stone, and not the less in loosening the grave clothes. Not unto the man who supposing himself converted, supposes himself therefore certain of salvation, without a struggle and a sacrifice. He cannot have life unless he is striving to free himself from the furniture of death. The great change of conversion has not passed upon anyone of you, if he be not continually endeavouring to cast off the bindings of a corrupt nature, that he may walk more freely in the service of God and look more closely towards the heaven which is above him.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1550.

Chap. xi., ver. 39.—"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone."

WE have here the Grave, the Stone, the Command.

I. In the grave we are to see heathendom. Under any circumstances it is hard, and ought to be hard, to change the religion, whether of an individual, or of a race. It is hard, because it is so noble. I suppose if anything under the sun should be dear to an honest man, it is his religion. It colours his life, shapes his principles, points his motives, consecrates his actions. It is inherited from his parents; it twines round the roots of his childhood; it smiles on his bridal; it softens the shadows of his grave. And when the religion you propose to substitute is a religion with a Cross in it, with no material prosperity for its reward, and a world to come as its distant recompense, is it wonderful that one who asks what the exchange will bring to him, and is told "the reproach of Christ," is slow in giving his reply?

II. But Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone." It may be roughly observed that there are three stages in mission work, with usually a logical order of their own. Though, of course, when it pleases Him, God confounds this order, by cutting across it, or anticipating it, thereby manifesting His sovereignty and doing all the work Himself. (1) There is the work of preparation by civilisation and education, in which the stone is rolled away for light and air to come in. (2) There is the work

of evangelisation by which the Word of God is spoken straight into the spirit, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." (3) There is the final work of watering and watching and maturing the young life just born by pastoral care and superior tendence. "Loose him, and let him go." We believe in the redeeming purpose of God, and that it is His will presently to gather together in one all things in Christ; and though He seems to be waiting, He knows why He is waiting; be sure, that when all things are made plain at break of day, there will be no flaw in His perfect righteousness, no speck or stain on the mercy of His heart.

BISHOP THOROLD, *Good Words*, 1880, p. 458.

REFERENCES: xi. 39.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 281; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 87. xi. 39-44.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1052. xi. 40.—F. Stephens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 374; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 281; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 537. xi. 41, 42.—A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, p. 125; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. vii., p. 141. xi. 43.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 193. xi. 43-44.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1776; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iv., p. 636; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 307. xi. 46.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvii., p. 106.

Chap. xi., vers. 47, 48.—**"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this Man doeth many miracles," etc.**

THE Retributive Character of Divine Justice.

Observe:—

I. That men who set what they foolishly count their interest against their convictions—determined to stifle the latter lest they should sacrifice the former—these allow that Christ wrought miracles, but persist in rejecting Him for fear of being overtaken by temporal calamity. We are apt to regard such a case as that of the chief priests and Pharisees as standing wholly by itself, and not to be paralleled by any amongst ourselves, because the precise case can hardly recur—the case of the rejection of a prophet, whose miracles prove his claims, through dread of the consequences of acknowledging his authority; but we forget that the principle which produced this conviction may be at work in ourselves, that it may only be modified or disguised by external circumstances. Is it not a possible case—a case, which may occur among ourselves, that of a man feeling the duty of confessing and obeying Christ; but who is withheld from the performance of his duty by fears of the effect on his

temporal condition? In defiance of their own convictions, men determine to conciliate the world, either fearing that religion may injure their hopes, or hoping that irreligion may advance their temporal interests. What is the resolve to do wrong, after being satisfied that it is wrong, if not the gathering of a council to resist the truth, after being compelled to confess, "This Man doeth miracles?"

II. God will demonstrate His retributive justice by bringing on men the very evil they hope to avert by consenting to do violence to conscience. The Romans, whom the Jews hoped to propitiate by rejection of Christ, came down on their land with fire and sword and took their place and nation, which they thought to preserve by acting against conscience, and they were utterly destroyed and dispersed, and that by the very power whose favour it was their object to conciliate. There is often, if not always, an analogy between what men do and the punishment they are made to suffer; so that in reference, at least, to the temporal penalties of sin, God makes a scourge of the crime, or imprints on His judgment the very image of the provocation. The lesson from the whole subject is, that in place of averting any dreaded evil, we do our best to produce it, if through fear of it we are induced to sacrifice any principle.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1503.

REFERENCES: xi. 47-57.—*Homiletic Magazine*, xvii., p. 160.

Chap. xi., vers. 49, 50.—"**And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.**"

CONSIDER:—

I. This unscrupulous priest and his savage advice. Remember who he was: the high priest of the nation, with Aaron's mitre on his brow and centuries of illustrious traditions embodied in his person; in whose heart justice and mercy should have found a sanctuary, if they had fled from all others; whose ears ought to have been opened to the faintest whisper of the voice of God; whose lips should ever have been ready to witness for the truth. And see what he is: a crafty schemer, as blind as a mole to the beauty of Christ's character and the greatness of His words; utterly unspiritual; undisguisedly selfish, rude as a boor, cruel as a cut-throat; nay, he has reached that supreme height of wickedness in which he can dress his ugliest thought in the plainest words and send them into

the world unabashed. This selfish consideration of our own interests will, (1) make us as blind as bats to the most radiant beauty of truth; (2) bring us down to any kind and degree of wrong-doing; (3) must sear our conscience so that we may come to view the evil and never to know that there is anything wrong in it.

II. The unconscious prophet and his great prediction. The evangelist conceives that the man who filled the office of high priest, being the head of the theocratic community, was naturally the medium of a Divine oracle. Caiaphas was in reality the last of the high priests, and those that succeeded him for something less than half a century were but like ghosts that walked after cock-crow. "Being high priest, he prophesied." The lips of this unworthy, selfish, unspiritual, unscrupulous, cruel priest were so used as that, all unconsciously, his words lent themselves to the proclamation of the glorious central truth of Christianity, that Christ died for the nation that slew Him and rejected Him, nor for them alone, but for all the world.

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 257.

REFERENCES: xi. 49, 50.—F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 321; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 40. xi. 49-52.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 299. xi. 52.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 12th series, p. 109.

Chap. xi.—"If."

IN selecting this word we are struck with the frequency of its occurrence in this chapter. There is:—

I. The "If" of wisdom. Jesus answered "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not." The Lord is laying down a great philosophy of work, he is indicating that there are times and seasons for labour; and that not only is work to be done, but done at the proper time—the light for labour, the darkness for rest.

II. The "If" of hope shadowed by fear. "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." The disciples seem to have felt that Lazarus was dead, but hearing Jesus say that he slept, the disciples said, "Lord, if he sleep." Do we not sometimes say it is so, when we mean, we wish it were so?

III. The "If" of ignorance. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This is a beautiful "If" beyond doubt. It is employed for the purpose of increasing emphasis, deepening and enlarging spiritual certitude. With Jesus in the house, there can be no death. In the house of the saint bereavement itself becomes a sacrament. Death doth but

enlarge the horizon, and show the greater width of the universe.

IV. The "If" that calls to faith. "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God." God holds nothing back from faith.

V. The "If" of human despair. "If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him." Even the Pharisees must have an "If." There are people who must run down other people, depreciate them, who say "there are spots on the sun"—there will be spots on the earth as long as they live.

VI. The "If" of self-righteousness. If I might go beyond this chapter, it would be to quote two other "Ifs" full of meaning. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We deceive ourselves—we deceive nobody else. We are liars, and the truth is not in us. Men must be faithful with themselves, right down frank with their own spirits.

VII. The "If" of confession. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

PARKER, *Christian Commonwealth*, July 21st, 1887.

REFERENCES: xi.—G. Macdonald, *The Miracles*, p. 205; T. Birkett Dover, *The Ministry of Mercy*, p. 189. xii. 1.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 189. xii. 1-8. A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 300. xii. 1-9.—J. R. Harington, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 388; E. de Pressensé, *The Mystery of Suffering*, p. 211. xii. 1-10.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvii., p. 207. xii. 1-19.—W. Milligan, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 275. xii. 2.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 328; A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 3.

Chap. xii., ver. 3.—**"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair," etc.**

CHURCH Building and Church Decoration.

I. I only remember reading in the Old Testament of two collections being made, and both of these were for what we might call Church Building and Church Decoration. The one we shall find at the end of the Book of Exodus, and the other at the end of 1 Chronicles. To the glory of God and in grateful memory of all that God had done for them, were both the Tabernacle and the Temple erected, the freewill offering of a glad and thankful people. And God accepted it and them. The issue which the hypocrite Judas Iscariot tried to stir up about the gift of Mary, has been tried since his day and with equal

success. It is a needless, false and injurious conflict; as if to give to the glory of God in the beautifying of his Church were to take so much from the poor, as if no portion of the Church's wealth was available for any purely devout and religious purpose, till all the wants of all the poor were met and satisfied; wants, be it remembered, that if they were all supplied to-day would come out in some new form to-morrow. The world, let us thank God for it, is not so poor that there is only one way for gratifying those generous impulses which visit the heart and prompt to acts of singular liberality. As a rule, you will find that those who spend large sums of money on the house of their God are equally generous and beneficent in relieving the wants of others. Can this with equal truth be said of those who criticise and find fault with such expenditure?

II. If we really believe that our Church is the house of God, if we really believe that it is the place where God vouchsafes His own special presence to His people gathered there in His name, then surely everything we put therein ought to be of the best. Nothing can be too beautiful or too costly which this earth can produce to offer in the courts of the house of God. It was in this spirit that our fathers built and adorned the churches of God in our land. They felt as David did, ashamed to dwell in ceiled houses, while the Ark of God was uncared for; ashamed to have things comfortable and elegant at home, while the place where Christ had promised to meet His people was left as if it were little thought of.

CANON LLOYD, *Family Churchman*, June 9th, 1886.

REFERENCES: xii. 5.—S. A. Brooke, *Christ in Modern Life*, p. 258. xii. 7, 8.—G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 147.

Chap. xii., ver. 8.—"Me ye have not always." (With Matt. xxviii., ver. 20) —"Lo, I am with you alway."

THESE sayings remind us—

I. That we have in Christ One who is human, yet Divine.

II. One whose death as our Saviour is all important, and not less his life.

III. One who presides over the world where we are going, and over the world in which we now are.

J. KER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 281.

REFERENCES: xii. 9.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 280. xii. 10.—*Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 216. xii. 11.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, vol. i., p. 428.

Chap. xii., vers. 12, 13.—**"Much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet Him," etc.**

CHRIST'S Entrance into Jerusalem.

I. We, too, like the people in the text, should go forth to meet our Saviour, whenever He comes to us. So we would go forth to meet Him, some may perhaps be thinking, if He would indeed come to us, as He came to Jerusalem, in the body, that our eyes might see Him, and that our ears might hear His words so full of grace and truth. But we should remember, that if Jesus Christ were abiding at this day upon earth, He could only be in one place at one time. If He were dwelling here with you, all the rest of the world would be without Him. But now that He is in Heaven, He can be in all places at all times, just as the sun is not only with you in your garden, but quite as much with your neighbour in his corn-field, and with the sheep on the hills, and with the sailors on the broad sea.

II. But how are we to know when Christ is coming to us? If He does not come to us in the body, how and in what does He come? In everything, if you will but believe it, sin alone excepted. If we did but behold the hand that brings all our blessings to us, if we saw how they are brought to us by Him who cometh in the name of the Lord, they would become doubly, nay tenfold more lovely and precious, from the light of His love shining upon them. You know what a difference it makes in the brightness and beauty of everything in the world, when the sun is shining upon it—how cold and cheerless earth, sea, and sky would be without the sun—what freshness and gladness beams from them as soon as they are bathed in its light; such, so great, yea, still greater is the difference which it makes in the whole colour and aspect of our lives, if we look at the events which befall us, as ordained and sent to us by the love of our heavenly Lord and Saviour. In every dispensation and visitation of life, Christ comes to us, sin alone excepted. He came, not to conquer our great enemy once for all, but in order that He might be continually with us, with every one who believes in Him, standing by our side whenever we are attacked, strengthening our arms, nerving our hearts, bidding us to be of good courage, for that the enemy has already been conquered; bidding us lift up our souls to heaven, for that He has gained us a sure inheritance, if we will but strive to make it sure in the kingdom of His Eternal Father.

J. C. HARE *Sermons in Herstmonceux Church*, vol. ii., p. 361.

REFERENCES: xii. 12, 13.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 198. xii. 12-19.—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 263.

RELIGIOUS Enthusiasm—

I. The enthusiasm which is created by a multitude of men, is, in each one of the units who compose it, a result of the nature which God has given us.

II. The sense of association is the soul and strength of all powerful corporate action among human beings. It was this enthusiasm, arising from the sense of association among the members of a great assembly of human beings which our Lord took into His service so conspicuously and so deliberately on Palm Sunday.

III. Any warm feelings which God may in His mercy give us from time to time, should be regarded, not as ends in themselves, not as great spiritual attainments or accomplishments, but as means, only means, to an end beyond.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1084.

REFERENCES: xii. 13.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 269. xii. 15.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 208. xii. 16.—S. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 264; J. Keble, *Sermons on Various Occasions*, p. 417.

Chap. xii., ver. 19.—"The world is gone after Him."

Two questions here suggest themselves: What was it in Jesus Christ which so deeply stirred the enmity of the Pharisees? And what was it in Jesus Christ which made it true in any sense, that the world was gone after Him.

I. The Pharisees ought to have examined the commission of Christ, as (in some sense) they seem to have examined that of His forerunner the Baptist. But the difference between the message of John and the message of Jesus was just that which made all the difference to them between the credible and the incredible. Pharisees and Sadducees, we read, submitted themselves to John's baptism; his cry was for repentance, for sins done under the law; there was no direct announcement, as yet, of an altogether different righteousness. With Christ it was otherwise, "I came," He said, "not to destroy, but to fulfil," yet the thing "fulfilled" admits no further filling; and the Pharisee rightly perceived that henceforth it was system against system, law against gospel, merit against grace, a righteousness from below against a righteousness from above. They saw it, and they took their side.

II. Why does the world go after Christ? What is the

attraction? We will briefly touch three points. (1) The first is, reality. We may trifle with Christ, but Christ never trifles with us. This is what made the common people hear Him gladly. He is so different from the Pharisee; from the man whose face tells you that he has never had a struggle, and who will sleep just as soundly whether you hear or whether you forbear. "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him." (2) His unworldliness. No man thinks the better of a religious teacher for being worldly. This is a great though a common error. The last man whom worldly men, princes or peasants, will seek in their soul's extremity, is the physician who is half of this world; no cottage and no hovel is too mean for them, if they may but find in it a man who lives only for eternity. (3) His wonderful love. It was so new to publicans and sinners—it is so new to them now—to be treated with love. Most of all is this love felt when flesh and heart parteth. Very peculiar is that last hour in its helplessness, in its dependence, in its clearsightedness, and in its trust. Certainly no Pharisee avails anything beside the deathbed.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 257.

REFERENCES: xii. 20-22.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 24. xii. 20-23.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 244.

Chap. xii., vers. 20, 23.—**"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified."**

I. "THE hour is come." The culminating hour of His life, that hour which is to explain all that has happened, to reveal all that is unknown. "It behoved Him thus to suffer, and to enter into His glory." And His glory has been increasingly manifest ever since His death. From the Resurrection day until this day it has never waned; it has never ceased to grow. The corn of wheat that died has produced much fruit—fruit, in actual numbers rescued from sin and death—fruit in the characters these have borne, in the good works they have done, in the destruction of evil principles and the advancement of good ones in the world, and in the whole progress of Christian civilisation, fruit also which we cannot reckon here, of victories in death and triumphant entrances into heaven, and in the dauntless and unconquerable hope this day living in the heart of the Church, that all the world will be drawn at length to the Cross.

II. No suffering no glory. No dying with and for Christ unto sin and self and the world and time, then no joyful living with Him in the pure land of light. A superficial view of the subject, and

of human character might lead one to say, "If this be Christianity, then there are no Christians. Say not so. It is true, alas! that many wear the Christian name who have no right to it and who have yet to get the first idea of what it is to follow Christ. It is also true that many sincere Christians are very defective and very inconsistent. But it is also true that there are many of a purer and nobler stock. There are those who make the service of Christ the business of their life, the one thing they do. There are many who live simple consecrated lives, all out of sight. If Christ were to come and call His true servants to stand out in view, the number would be larger than we think, far greater than in our moments of despondency we fear. It would be the old story over again. The seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to this Baal-world, and who have not sacrificed their noblest selves to time and sense, would arise at the call, and stand up with the light of Heaven on their faces.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 75.

THE Cross is Christ's glory.

I. As regards the great enemy. The devil departed from Him for a season only. He had conquered him personally, and therefore by implication for those also to whom He was to become wedded and joined by the work of redemption; but the actual and final victory over Satan was achieved on the Cross. There the Son of God, made in the likeness of sinful flesh, suffered sin's penalty. He who hoped to crush Adam, was himself crushed in Christ. Satan had won his victory by hatred; Christ's victory over Satan was won by love. Satan, for his own malicious and selfish purpose, had brought ruin and misery into a happy world. Christ, for His glorious and blessed work, gave Himself to sorrow and suffering, that He might bring out the world into happiness tenfold as bright and holy as that which Satan ruined.

II. As regards man, the Cross is Christ's glory. On it, as has been said, was transacted the central event of man's world. All before, had reference to this; all after, flow forth from it. Not in the schools of Athens, not in the forum of Rome, not in poesy, not in art, has man been most glorified, but on the Cross of Jesus. There manhood bore its only fruit of love untouched by a blight; there it was honoured, not with the frenzy of the poet, nor with the subtlety of the philosopher, nor with the inspiration of the prophet, but with the union of the Godhead, stooping to share its sentence of death, and to bring it through death to glory.

III. The Cross was Christ's glory, as regarded Himself. "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living." He was born into the world that He might be a King, and here we have His Lordship established and His Kingdom inaugurated. The Cross then was the highest point of the glorification of the person and work of Jesus.

IV. And lastly, it was His glory, as regarded the Father. By the counsel of the Father's will was the mighty plan of redemption directed; the self-denying love of Jesus, His perfect obedience, His truth and righteousness, these all redounded to the glory of the Father Who sent Him; and these all found their highest example on the Cross. In it His Son glorified Him, and He glorified His great name; manifesting His wisdom, indicating His justice, and approving His love.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 216.

REFERENCES: xii. 21.—J. B. Heard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 247; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 108; J. Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 203; S. Baring Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 213; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 307. xii. 23.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 15. xii. 23-28.—F. W. Robertson, *The Human Race and Other Sermons*, p. 209.

Chap. xii., ver. 24.—**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."**

LET us try to grasp this principle in its simplicity and strength. In nature "a corn of wheat" is what it is itself alone. The burial in the ground and death make a wondrous change in the wheat; it is no longer itself alone; it gathers more, it multiplies itself, it comes out, associated with and increased into many things like itself.—"It bringeth forth much fruit." Just so with the kingdom of grace. Death is essential to all augmentation; whatever does not undergo death, is solitary; whatever would bring forth fruit, must die.

I. Consider this principle, first, as respects Christ Himself. Christ might, had He so pleased, have abode with the Father, in the glory which He had with Him before the world was. He would have been happy in the adoration of angels and in His own perfections. But as respects that which now makes the very character and being of the Lord Jesus Christ, He would have been alone. Such happiness was not the happiness of the heart of Jesus. He could not, in His very nature, acquiesce in solitary life. Therefore, that He might not

be alone, that beautiful plant of the Lord's planting fell into the ground and died. And this was the joy that sustained Him all along, that He would not be alone afterwards. The conversion and the life of the whole world springs out of the fall of that one precious seed into the earth.

II. But the principle which is true of the life of Christ, outwardly, is equally true of the inner life of Christ in a man's soul; all living comes out of dying. We bring with us into the world a certain natural character—it is not the character which it ought to be—it is not the character that is to be; but in that natural character there is a germ—there is a capability. Now, the great process of grace, when it comes into the soul, is, that natural character, which we commonly call self, shall die, in order that the germ and capability of good may unfold itself and expand. When it does unfold, the old man dies under the unfolding of the principle of grace, the old nature decays away. And now the new thing which comes out is the spiritual man. It is like Christ—it is pure and good and useful; to the praise of God, it brings forth much fruit.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 11th series, p. 251.

REFERENCES: xii. 24.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 257; vol. x., p. 304; D. Fraser, *Metaphors of the Gospels*, p. 328; G. Moberly, *Plain Sermons at Brightstone*, p. 76; S. C. Gordon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 72; *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 347; D. Young, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 253; F. J. Austin, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 268; J. R. Macduff, *Communion Memories*, p. 1. xii. 24, 25.—C. Kingsley, *All Saints' Day*, p. 101; S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 258. xii. 24-26.—G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to My Friends*, p. 13. xii. 25.—E. W. Shalders, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 181.

Chap. xii., ver. 26.—**"If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be."**

THE Ascension, our Glory and Joy.

I. All the mysteries of the "Word made flesh," have their special comfort for us, and so has the mystery of the Ascension. It were little for us, compared to this, that God the Son had taken our nature, if then (as misbelievers said of old) it had been dissolved into the majesty and glory of God, and had ceased to be, although in God. And so our whole union with God would have been forfeited. Christ would have ceased to be, and the Incarnation of God the Son would have come to nought. It is our very own Lord, He Who became one of us, Who walked to and fro among us, Who went about healing all who were oppressed by the devil, comforting the

broken-hearted, keeping company with sinners, admitting publicans and harlots to come to Him; it is He, the sinners' friend, Who is now at the right hand of God for us.

II. What He was, He is; save as to those infirmities which in heaven cannot be. In heaven He cannot again be hungry, or weary, or athirst, or sorrowful, as neither shall we be if by His grace we attain thither. But He has, even now, *that* of our nature, which we, His members, shall have in the glory of the resurrection. The very presence of His glorified body in heaven is an earnest of mercy stored up for us. He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

III. He is entered in, not for Himself only, nor only to intercede for us, but to prepare a place for us; that where He is, there, He saith, may My servant be. Nay, there, in a manner we are already. For where the Head is, there in some sort, in token and in earnest, and in virtue are the members. There is our conversation; there our life is hid; there are the first fruits of the Spirit; there has He made us to sit in heavenly places with Himself; there is our home; there, if by God's grace we persevere, above the stars, are the vacant seats prepared for us, that as He overcame and is set down with the Father on His throne, so to us, by His strength overcoming, shall He say, Sit down with Me in My throne.

E. P. PUSEY, *Parochial Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 210.

REFERENCES: xii. 26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 463; S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 274.

Chap. xii., ver. 27.—**"Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name."**

A PECULIAR interest must ever attach to these words in the record of the events that led up to, and immediately preceded, the passion of our Lord. It is impossible to read this incident in St. John's narrative, without being struck by its intensely graphic features, and its inimitable originality. It has been compared to one of those deep fissures in the crust of the earth's surface, which enable us to fathom the depths below. The Speaker suffers us to look down into the inmost centre of His being. In the courts of the Temple, in the presence of many witnesses, after a moment of ecstatic triumph, after an anticipation of coming triumph, suddenly there is a pause, and He who is generally so calm and self-controlled, Himself testifies to an inward conflict. His soul is troubled to its lowest depths. He

gives utterance to a cry, a petition, and though that cry is instantly hushed in uttermost submission, yet it is uttered and it is real.

I. In a certain sense, of course, we all acknowledge that our Lord predicted His sad future; but it may be doubted whether we are accustomed to make the fact sufficiently real to ourselves; for it is one to which history affords no adequate parallel. It confronts us with a phase of human experience, in which our Lord stands absolutely alone, and which it is not too much to say that neither design nor imagination would ever have thought of attributing to Him. For it is to be remembered that the evangelists had nothing in the past that could form a precedent for such personal predictions. It is a fact of universal experience that to none of the children of men is it given to pierce the veil of his personal future. No man can tell what to-morrow or next week, or next year, may have in store for him. In the whole range of the prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi, no one is recorded to have essayed to predict the mode or the manner of his own death.

II. What had never been realised before since the world began is in the Gospel narrative set forth, simply, artlessly, without any strain or effort, and we are assured that a foreknowledge of His end, with all its attendant circumstances, was not only claimed by our Lord and affirmed just before His passion, but unfolded long before in a series of orderly and progressive predictions. We find that from the first this consciousness was present with Him. Sometimes He speaks of it darkly and enigmatically, affirming now that the Temple of His body shall be destroyed, and on the third day restored; now that, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. Sometimes, but not till His disciples were able to bear it, He had spoken of it openly, clearly, without the intervention of type or figure or dark saying. Calmly, deliberately, He affirms not that He *may*—not that He *will*—but that He *must*, go up to Jerusalem and there suffer and die. As the crisis draws nearer and nearer, so His anticipations of the immediate future increase in number and definiteness; now He declares in the presence of multitudes His speedy departure from the world; now He warns His Apostles that one among them will prove the traitor; now He definitely marks out that traitor by a whispered sign; now He sums up all previous hints, dark sayings, mysterious soliloquies, clear predictions, in the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

III. The prescience of suffering receives perhaps its highest expression in the Agony in the Garden. On human principles that agony is wholly misplaced. It comes before the time. It anticipates the occasion which human experience would have suggested. There have indeed been signal triumphs won by the genius of poetical imagination. But in all literature there is no other instance of the ascription to the hero of the story of a series of predictions pointing to and describing the circumstances of his own decease, as by the Saviour of the world, much less an attempt to harmonise them with the details of a narrative, the interest of which shifts from place to place, and involves a multiplicity of incidents, persons, places, occasions. These predictions, I venture to think, have an evidential value of their own, and constitute another link in the chain of evidence that our Lord was indeed all that He claimed to be—Son of Man and Son of God, the Foreknowing Saviour, the Predestined Sacrifice.

D. MACLEAR, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Nov. 9th, 1882.

REFERENCES: xii. 27, 28.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 193; S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 299; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. vii., p. 332. xii. 27-31.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 142.

Chap. xii., ver. 28.—"Father, glorify Thy Name."

THE craving of sinfulness is for self-glorification. The thirst of godliness is for the glory of God. He who sees God's Name and comprehends it, hears God's Name and understands it, looks at it and reads it, listens to God's Name and rejoices in it, and sees in his own name part of God's Name, will ever cry "Father, glorify Thy Name." And as those whom Jesus Christ leads and governs are saved from sin, and are taught to live according to godliness, this is the aspiration of their life.

I. Jesus Christ not only shows us the Father, and reconciles us to the Father, but teaches us to seek His glory as the end of life and of salvation. When all, by Jesus Christ's teaching and leading, shall know God, this will be the prayer of all, from the least to the greatest. In studio and study, in factory and church, in peasant's cot and palace, in every place of work and recreation and association, you will hear "Father, glorify Thy Name." And while the seraphs cry "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty," and the innumerable choir of angels sing, "Glory be to God most high," the distant voices of earth shall be heard, softly but sweetly, saying, "Father, glorify Thy Name."

II. We may use our text (1) for self-examination. Jesus Christ said, at this crisis of His life and at every crisis, "Father, glorify Thy name." What have we said? What do we say? Have we not sometimes remained in Jerusalem to glorify our own name, instead of going to Nazareth to glorify our Father's name? (2) Let us seek the state of heart which the prayer expresses, and making the prayer our own, let us embody its spirit in our whole life. Be not much concerned about the length of your life, or the circumstances of your death; leaving yourself in God's hands, submit to His arrangement. "Father, glorify Thy name." Then, how Divine the peace which shall keep the heart and mind, and how Godlike the rest which shall possess our soul. All that is within us shall be in sweet accord, the intellect and the heart, the reason and the passions. Our eye will be single, and our whole body full of light. With many things to do, at but one thing shall we aim. With many impulses, one great principle shall govern our will.

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 374.

REFERENCES: xii. 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 909, vol. xxiv., No. 1391; S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 312; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 268; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 279; vol. v., p. 312; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvii., p. 372; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 8th series, p. 56.

Chap. xii., ver. 29.—**"The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to Him."**

MISINTERPRETATION of the Voice of God.

I. When we read the history of our Blessed Lord's first coming into the world, and thoroughly realise who He was that came, it is almost impossible not at times to feel that it must have been a very severe trial for the men of that generation to believe on Him. It was no advantage, but a stern sifting of soul, to have looked on Christ face to face. Why did God so disguise Himself? Why did He not make it easier to recognise Him? Observe: (1) that to have surrounded our Blessed Lord with such a visible glory as should have made unbelief impossible would have been to violate the whole order of the universe; it would have overturned the whole principle of God's dealings with men. What is that principle? It is to try men and to prove them. If God is to show Himself to any generation of men, and yet not stop their probation, He must put a veil over His face. (2) There is no reason to think that any wonder in heaven above or earth beneath, however startling, could have altogether prevented unbelief. Here comes in the

text. The men of our Lord's day wanted proof. What proof could there be greater than a voice from heaven? The voice from heaven swelled forth upon the air, the startled multitude caught the sound, but few recognised it to be God's. Any explanation to the many was better than to bow the knee and worship. And so, while yet the Almighty accents lingered upon the hushed air, the people that stood by said that "it thundered."

II. The whole history of the Christian Church, from the beginning to the end, does but exemplify over and over again this same truth. From the first Advent to the last, upon all the mighty verities of God's revelation, the multitude have been divided. While a few have recognised the Divine Voice and the Divine Hand, the mass have seen nothing, heard nothing. This is true, (1) of the coming of Christ to judge the world, (2) of the Church as the kingdom of Christ, (3) of the Sacraments. From the days of Cain and Abel there have ever been the two classes—the humble receivers of God's Word, the self-conceited opposers of it; the men who throw themselves into God's way to be saved, and the men who would save themselves in their own way. The world will cry to the last "It only thundered," while God's elect are whispering with anxious hearts, rejoicingly yet tremblingly, "An Angel spake."

BISHOP WOODFORD, *Sermons on Subjects from the New Testament*, p. 43.

REFERENCES: xii. 29, 30.—S. COX, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 325. xii. 30.—E. Jenkins, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 308. xii. 31.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 337; *Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 311.

Chap. xii., ver. 32.—**"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."**

I. IN these words our Lord foretells the gathering out and knitting together of His mystical body, which is the Church. From the time of His ascension into heaven, and the shedding abroad of the Holy Ghost, He has been working unseen upon the spirits of mankind; He has been drawing together the living stones of His spiritual house. He has been working out this great all-comprehending aim—the perfection of His Church. There has been not a change, but a growth; as the springing or unfolding of a stately tree; a growth, not only of bulk, but of beauty, ever opening itself to the drawings and invitations of a gentle sky; so His mystical body has grown from childhood to youth and manhood, throwing out new powers of illuminated

reason and of regenerate will, ever advancing unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

II. Note the way by which He, in His Church, draws men one by one unto Himself. He is in the midst of His Church, and we are ranged round Him in many measures of approach, as if we were in the many courts or precincts which surround His eternal throne. All of you has He been drawing; and if you look back you can see the links in the chain which has drawn you until now. A word, a thought, a chance, a sickness, a sorrow, a desolation of heart in the daytime, or a dream of the past in the night season, alone, or in the throng of men, in your chamber, or at the altar, something pierced deep into your soul and there abode. And then he has led you, little by little, with gentle steps, hiding the full length of the way that you must tread, lest you should start aside in fear and faint from weariness. Your place, your crown, your ministry, in His unseen kingdom, are all marked out for you. He is drawing you towards your everlasting portion. At that day when he shall have brought unto Mount Zion the last of His redeemed flock, then shall we know what He is now doing with us under a veil and in silence. We shall no more follow Him unseen, but behold Him face to face.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 274.

THE Cross of Christ the Measure of the World.

I. It is the death of the Eternal Word, of God made flesh, which is our great lesson how to think and how to speak of this world. His Cross has put its due value upon everything which we see, upon all fortunes, all advantages, all ranks, all dignities, all pleasures, upon the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It has set a price upon the excitements, the rivalries, the hopes, the fears, the desires, the efforts, the triumphs of mortal man. It has given a meaning to the various shifting courses, the trials, the temptations, the sufferings of his earthly state. It has brought together and made consistent all that seemed discordant and aimless. It has taught us how to live, how to use this world, what to expect, what to desire, what to hope. It is the tone into which all the strains of this world's music are ultimately to be resolved.

II. It may be objected: But the world seems made for the enjoyment of just such a being as man, and man is put into it. He has the capacity of enjoyment, and the world supplies the means. How natural this, what a simple as well as pleasant

philosophy, yet how different from that of the Cross. (1) Whatever force this objection may have, surely it is merely a repetition of that which Eve felt and Satan urged in Eden; for did not the woman see that the forbidden tree was "good for food," and a tree to be desired? (2) It is but a superficial view of things to say that this life is made for pleasure and happiness. To those who look under the surface it tells a very different tale. The doctrine of the Cross does but teach the very same lesson which this world teaches to those who live long in it, who have much experience in it, who know it. It may be granted, then, that the doctrine of the Cross is not on the surface of the world. The surface of things is bright only, and the Cross is sorrowful; it is a hidden doctrine, it lies under a veil; it at first sight startles us, and we are tempted to revolt from it. And yet it is a true doctrine, for truth is not on the surface of things, but in the depths. Let us not trust the world, let us not give our hearts to it; let us not begin with it. Let us begin with faith, let us begin with Christ. They alone are able truly to enjoy this world who begin with the world unseen. They alone can truly feast who have first fasted; they alone are able to use the world who have learned not to abuse it; they alone inherit it who take it as a shadow of the world to come, and who for that world to come relinquish it.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 83.

How is it that Christ, lifted upon the Cross, draws all men unto Him?

Many answers might be given, and all true, to the question now proposed. Two must suffice.

I. The attraction of the Cross is first an attraction of admiration. Who has not felt his heart burn within him as he read of a life given for another? Now when Christ, lifted up from the earth, draws all men to Him, it is in part by the help of admiration. When a man has to learn for the first time what Christ is; when, either from defective instruction or a sceptical temper, he has to lay for himself the foundations of belief, to answer afresh the great question "What shall I think of Christ?" the first instrument of conviction will be commonly that feeling of admiration which must be roused by the study of the character, and most of all the character as manifested on the Cross.

II. Christ did not rest, nor would have us rest, in that superficial sort of relation to Him, which contents many writers

and thinkers of our age; a relation which has in it only the satisfaction to be derived from a lovely scene or a beautiful countenance, which a man may just look upon and go his way and forget. If you examine the context, you will see that all points another way. It is not as the magnet of a moral beauty that Christ chiefly regards the attractiveness of His Cross. Not admiration, but faith is that which He asks of us. The object of that "lifting up," which was to be thus all-powerful to attract, was no mere exhibition of an admirable long-suffering; no representation, acted on some magnificent stage, of a superhuman excellence of doing, feeling, suffering; not this, but the very work itself which the Cross effected, the bearing of the sins of the world, the making reconciliation for iniquity, the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness. The reason why we feel differently in kind as well as in degree, towards Christ lifted up from the earth, is to be sought not in the admiration, but in the faith. Though admiration may draw us towards Him, it is faith alone which draws us to Him.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 23.

UNIVERSALITY and Individuality of Christ's Gospel.

I. Universality is one attribute of Christ's wholesome words, "I will draw all men unto Me." A universality (1) of intention, (2) of invitation, (3) of potency, (4) of kind. Christ draws to Himself men of all characters and men of all histories.

II. Individuality is another attribute of Christ's wholesome words. The race can only be evangelised through the members. To excuse repentance, to excuse faith, to excuse holiness is, in other words, to excuse happiness, to excuse salvation, to excuse heaven. The Gospel kingdom when it comes, must come not in name but in power; they who are drawn to Christ crucified must be drawn spiritually, and therefore drawn personally and one by one. (1) It is the business of each one of us to apprehend the Gospel of a free, a personal absolution. There must be a solemn giving of the individual soul exactly as it is seen to be and felt to be in history and in circumstance, into the hands of God Himself, on the ground of a revelation made by Him in the Gospel as to a free and total forgiveness of all sin through the alone merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Again, it is the business of each one of us to apprehend for himself the Gospel promise of a Holy and Divine Spirit to dwell personally in him as the life of his life and the soul of his soul. God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; then if

that be true we have only to ask and we shall receive. (3) It is the business of each one of us, having thus stamped upon himself by an individual act the seal of his consecration, the double seal of a Divine absolution and a Divine indwelling, then to go forth as a forgiven man and as a spiritual man, not indeed to presume upon what he has done, but as much as possible to forget himself; to forget himself in the Saviour's service and to forget himself in giving his very life for his brethren. Let the individual life, thus far and in this holy sense, be merged and lost in the relative. Thus through Him shall the Almighty Lord make good His Divine saying, "I, lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *University Sermons*, p. 89.

WHEREIN consists the attractive power of the crucifixion of our Lord?

I. That which, first of all, draws men in reverence and love to Jesus Christ hanging on the Cross, is the moral beauty, the moral strength, of self-sacrifice. By sacrifice I mean here the surrender of that which is most precious to self for the benefit of others. A sacrifice exerts a vast power, nothing less than a fascination, over those who witness it. It does this for three distinct reasons. Sacrifice, first of all, requires a moral effort of the highest kind. It is an exhibition of strength. This force of will, like all strength, whether moral, or mental, or physical, is of itself beautiful. Secondly, self-sacrifice attracts because of its rarity. As we admire gems and flowers for their rarity, not less than for their intrinsic beauty, so we are drawn to great examples of self-sacrifice, not merely because of their proper lustre, but because they are in contradiction to the ordinary tenor of human life. But, thirdly, sacrifice attracts by its fertilising power. All good that is done among men is proportioned only and exactly to the amount of sacrifice which is required to produce it. To witness sacrifice is of itself to breathe a bracing atmosphere. To be capable of sacrifice is already to be strong. Is not the voluntary self-sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross the secret of His attraction at this moment for His creatures, who know that sacrifice is as beautiful as it is rare, who know that it is as rare as it is productive.

II. A second explanation of the attraction which Jesus Christ upon the Cross exerts over the hearts of men is to be found in the prevalence of suffering in human life. Not when teaching upon the mountain, not when sitting at the festive board, not

when rising from the grave, not when mounting from the earth to beyond the stars, but when hanging upon the tree of shame, Jesus is most welcome to a race whose days are few and evil, whose life at the very best is chequered by sorrow and pain.

III. Jesus Christ crucified attracts us on the Cross, because He is the love as well as the wisdom of God; because He is the well-beloved Son, no less than the eternal intelligence of the Father; because He is not merely the first of all teachers of moral truth, but the all sufficient victim for the sins of men. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 294.

THE Attractive Influence of the Cross.

I. We read these words in the first instance as they are spoken by One who is nothing more than what He at first sight appears—a peasant prophet of Galilee; and if you view them in this aspect, you will be struck by the very strange ambition which they unfold. He dreams of universal sovereignty. A revolt in Judea in favour of the Christ would have been regarded with no more concern among the magnates at Rome than the Ashantee War amongst ourselves. And yet, suspected by His associates, plotted against by His fellow countrymen, hated by the religious part of the community, He dreams still that He will subdue the world, and draw all men to Himself.

II. But if the dream is strange and vast, when viewed in that light, even more strange does it become when we consider the lofty spiritual tone which it assumes. This is not the language of the worldly conqueror—"I will *draw* all men to Myself." His words are cast in a sterner mould. His ambition concerns more material interest. He seeks to subdue realms, to bring territories under his sway. Jesus of Nazareth covets only the hearts of men. It was not the language of enthusiasm; it was not the language of imposture; but it was language which is unearthly in the strength and loftiness of its self-sacrificing love. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

III. In these words our Saviour affirms the attractive influence of His Cross. Has this all come true? Yes, it has come true. The dream of the peasant prophet now looks like an approximately realised fact. I realise its fulfilment in the wide extended influence of Christian principle; I realise it in this fact, that the civilised world is expressed by another word, which implies the reign, the dominion of Christ—when we

speak of the civilised world as Christendom. So has the Galilean triumphed. But I realise its fulfilment even more in the total reversal of the reputations of men. Many who exercised sway in the day of Christ owe the immortality of their names to the strange providence that linked their lives with the despised Galilean, so wondrously has that dream come true—"I will draw all men unto Me."

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 668.

I. THE important event the text anticipates. Our Lord here refers to the crucifixion. The exaltation of Christ in the ministry of the Gospel comprehends: (1) The recital of the manner of the Redeemer's death. (2) The declaration of the great design of His death. (3) The proclamation of His power to save, with the terms on which He saves.

II. The grand purpose the text reveals: (1) The point to which He attracts—"unto Me." (2) The manner in which He attracts—the view of the Divine character presented by the lifting up of Christ on the Cross is eminently attractive. (3) The scale on which He attracts—"all men."

J. RAWLINSON, *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 369.

REFERENCES: xii. 32.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 139; vol. xiii., No. 775; S. Baring Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 82; S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 285; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 461; W. Dorling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 72; F. Ferguson, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 97; J. Greenhough, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiv., p. 241; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 130; J. Keble, *Sermons for Holy Week*, p. 173; H. P. Liddon, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 88; D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 27; F. Morse, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 636.

Chap. xii., vers. 32, 33.

THE Atonement.

I. Christ came to remit *sin*—the debt incurred by man to his God. Punishment, as St. Paul speaks of it, is not an arbitrary penalty for sin, having no direct reference to the sin; but it flows directly from the offence, even as a plant from the seed that is sown. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We suffer for every sin of our own; for every sin of those whose influence has been directly or indirectly upon us. The punishment of sin is not remitted, nor can it be. Whatever was the purpose of the atonement, it was not to restore that state of things which existed before sin entered the world. Those of us who have accepted and made their own the sacrifice of Christ, and are living reconciled to God, and redeemed be

its strength and comfort, are still bearing the penalty of sin. Now what becomes of the doctrine, so common (except in the Bible), that the object of the atonement was to abolish the consequences of sin? This must be false teaching, for the answer to it is simply in the fact that whatsoever a man sows that *does* he reap.

II. I do not remember that the Bible even says that the object of Christ's death was to deliver us from hell. It speaks of sin as the thing from which we need to be saved. A state of sin—a state where God is not—is hell, whether in this state of being, or in some other. From this spiritual state the Son of Man was manifested that He might deliver us. "Yes," my opponents may say, "so far we agree with you. But you are putting out of sight the real difficulty—the real stumbling-block. As far as your statement goes, Christ's *life* alone might save us. We believe that it was His death that had the atoning power. He died for the sins of the world." And we reply to our imaginary opponent, "We cannot deny your words, for they are an echo of the whole Gospel message, and they are confirmed by the history of Christianity since the death of Christ. We only differ from you in this, that we cannot separate the incarnation of Christ, and His life on earth, from His death, in estimating the sacrifice that He made for men." In His life and death are concentered His whole message, His whole nature. Small wonder that the Saviour in that strain of mighty prophecy, should look forward to His death as raising Him above the world to an elevation, from which, like the "moist star upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands," He should sway the mighty tide of human affection to Himself. "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

A. AINGER, *Sermons in the Temple Church*, p. 62.

REFERENCES: xii. 32, 33.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1717; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 85.—xii. 33 *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 194.

Chap. xii., ver. 34.—"Who is this Son of Man?"

WHAT is the force of this name, as applied to Himself, by our Lord?

I. We have in it, Christ putting out His hand to draw us to Himself, identifying Himself with us.

II. We have, just as distinctly, Christ, by the use of this name, in a very real sense distinguishing Himself from us and claiming to hold a unique and solitary relation to mankind.

And then we have Christ, by the use of this name in its connection with the ancient prophecy, pointing us onward to the wonderful future. The name carries with it (1) a blessed message of the present activity and perpetual manhood of the risen Lord. (2) A reminder of the second coming of that perfect manhood to be our Judge.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 1st series, p. 289.

REFERENCES: xii. 34.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 219. xii. 35.—*Literary Churchman Sermons*, p. 108.

Chap. xii., vers. 35, 36.—"**Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you,**" etc.

THE True Light and the False.

The desire for light is one of the deepest natural instincts of man. The heathen man prayed that if he were to be smitten, he might be smitten in the light, and not in darkness. And the idea of Christ's Gospel is, that it is a light shining in a dark place, to which, however, men can close their eyes, so that they cannot see it, but go on still in darkness. All the apparatus of the Church is for this simple end—to enable men to have that light which is life, and to have it more abundantly.

I. I do not myself regard this light as given to us to enable us to fathom mysteries. Christianity is a very simple thing. Its object is just this one—to bring men's wandering hearts back to God. It shines rather upon the will and conscience than upon the intellect; and the path of duty is very seldom other than simple and plain. "Love God," says the great Latin doctor, St. Augustine, "Love God, and then do what thou likest." He means that if we love God, we shall never even wish to do anything that would displease Him. Our perplexities, such as they are, arise when the love of the world, or the love of self, cuts across and comes into conflict with the love of God.

II. What is the Kingdom of Man that we are bidden to welcome with hosannas and hallelujahs? Is it a kingdom where every man shall do that which seemeth right in his own eye? Is it the rule of selfishness, of material force, of barbaric splendour, of inordinate wealth? Is it the rule of scientific discovery, reckless of all considerations save its own results? Is it that state which is so well figured in the phrase, "light without love"? The signs of the kingdom of man are manifest enough among us; I would fain see more tokens of the Kingdom

of God. If Christianity has failed, what else is there that has triumphed? Where is the tree of life in your philosophy or in your science, that you have ready to plant on either side of the river, bearing its twelve manner of fruits and yielding its fruits every month, and whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations? If all you mean is to bid us rid from Christianity all that we have imported into it—that is, alien from its name, foreign to its purpose, destructive of its true moralising influence—I could join in your cry with heart and soul. I am only too painfully conscious how much there is that is hollow, unreal, nay, almost revolting, in many of the most popular forms of the religionism of the day. I have no love for what Jeremy Taylor called "a too curiously articulated creed." I mourn over the folly of those who seek to persuade rational beings that Christianity is a thing of spells and rites and incantations. I have not much confidence in the stimulants which are given to emotions that lie in perilously close neighbourhood to unsanctified and even sensuous passion. I have not so learned Christ from Paul. To me the Gospel is a simpler and helpfuller thing. It teaches me not so much how to feel according to the standard of religious propriety, how to express myself according to the standards of Catholic orthodoxy, but how to live after the pattern of the Sermon on the Mount, how to die in the faith and with the hopes of the great Apostle Paul. And what I have to preach is, that if any man be in Christ, really and truly, by that very fact he is, or becomes, a new creature. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

BISHOP FRASER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 369.

REFERENCES: xii., 37-41.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1844. xii. 42, 43.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 244; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 148.

Chap. xii., ver. 43.—"They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

I. IT is an obvious question, Why is it wrong to love the praise of men? For it may be objected, that we are accustomed to educate the young by means of praise and blame; that we encourage them by kind words from us, that is, from man; and punish them for disobedience. If, then, it may be argued, it is right to regard the opinions of others concerning us in our youth, it cannot be in itself wrong to pay attention to it at any other period of life. This is true; but I do not say that the mere love of praise and fear of shame are evil; regard to the

corrupt world's praise or blame, this is what is sinful and dangerous. St. John, in the text, implies that the praise of men was, at the time spoken of, in opposition to the praise of God. It must be wrong to prefer anything to the will of God. If the world at large took a correct and religious view of things, then its praise and blame would in its place be valuable too. The reason why we say it is wrong to pursue the world's praise is, because we cannot have it and God's praise too. And yet as the pursuit of it is wrong, so is it common for this reason: because God is unseen, and the world is seen; because God's praise and blame are future, the world's are present; because God's praise and blame are inward, and come quietly and without keenness, whereas the world's are very plain and intelligible, and make themselves felt.

II. I could say to those who fear the world's censure, this: (1) Recollect you cannot please all parties; you must disagree with some or other; you have only to choose (if you are determined to look to man) with which you will disagree. And further, you may be sure that those who attempt to please all parties, please fewest, and that the best way to gain the world's good opinion is to show that you prefer the praise of God. (2) Think of the multitude of beings, who, unseen themselves, may yet be surveying our conduct. Accustom yourself, then, to feel that you are on a public stage, whatever your station of life may be; that there are other witnesses to your conduct besides the world around you, and if you feel shame of men, you should feel much more shame in the presence of God, and those servants of His that do His pleasure. (3) Still further: You fear the judgment of men upon you. What will you think of it on your death-bed? You fear shame; well, and will you not shrink from shame at the judgment-seat of Christ? "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation."

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 41.

Two Ambitions.

I. The praise of men. What our Lord calls "honour one from another." The praise of men will bid us to be moral, to be diligent, to be exemplary, to be religious. Thus far, it runs side by side with the praise of God. But there are points in every life, or there is one point, where the two roads diverge.

Now and then the alternative is proposed, suddenly, seriously, decisively, "Who is on the Lord's side?" A word must be spoken, or not spoken. Any social table, any home fireside, may furnish the occasion, an act must be done or not done, a gain made or refused, a hopeful prospect hailed or thought scorn of. What manner of persons ought we to be, on whose innermost motive those momentous issues hang.

II. There are those, St. John tells us, who have in them, really and effectually, the other ambition; who sincerely and practically love the praise of God more than the praise of men. The praise of God would have uttered itself to them in no audible sound; in no voice from the sky, convincing and comforting, "Well done, good and true;" simply and solely in this—a conscience calmed at once and strengthened by a sense of peril met and duty done; a soul finding its rest in the truth and in the life, in a Person the desire of all nations, and a spiritual communion, satisfying and everlasting. This is the praise of God in the present. To have this is to be at peace; to love this is to be happy; to live for this is to live above earth, Paradise regained and heaven opened. The man who lives for the praise of God is an independent man; his chains are broken off, and he lives and moves and thinks in freedom—not unmoved by earth's interests, for the hand of God and the mind of God are in all things; not untouched by earth's affections, for he who loves God loves his brother also; not idly dreaming of glories to come, but using the world and the fulness thereof as not abusing. Thus he passes through life, watchful not to lose the grace given, fleeing from evil because God hates it, freely imparting, in an influence unwearied and never upbraiding, the love freely received. At length, the departure, to be where it is better; the staff of God comforting the journey, and at its close the at last spoken "Well done!" Then shall he who has here sought the praise of God find it and rejoice in it for ever.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 56.

THE belief in a Divine Father, to whom our conduct has relation, differentiates at once and for ever religious from secular morality.

I. The thought of a present God, One who knows us, loves us, desires us, co-operates with our efforts, is essential to our practice of the Christian virtues. But we are living at the present time in an intellectual atmosphere, from which that thought has been, to a large extent, eliminated. The con-

sequence is that a great number, if not a majority of professing Christians, have adopted a morality which is no longer distinctively Christian. Their speculative belief, it is true, may have remained unchanged, but the disintegrating influence of this subtle, impalpable, pervasive, corrosive atmosphere has loosened, without their knowledge, the bond of their conduct to their creed; and they live and move and act, in practical affairs, without feeling from day to day the need of the Divine co-operation, the force of the Divine attraction, the constraint of the Divine love. But dangers which elude us by their subtlety do not cease to be real dangers. If what is called agnosticism were the exclusive characteristic of obvious antagonists in well-defined array, it would be no very new enemy to the Church of Christ. But modern agnosticism is nothing of this kind; it is a shifting shapeless mist, that now covers our enemies and now our friends, and now hides the true nature of the battle-ground between us. It means a hundred things in the mouths of a hundred different men. It is now a synonym for atheism, and now the chosen weapon of the Christian apologist, and we must, therefore, if we would clear our conduct from the spell of this mesmeric influence, force the word to give an account of itself, and tell us what it means.

II. Strictly speaking, the word agnosticism should be confined to the position of those who maintain that there is no evidence in the empirical and experimental sciences, when taken by themselves, to prove or to disprove the existence of a God. But such a doctrine, to say the least of it, is in no way incompatible with the Christian belief in a God whom no man hath seen at any time, who is not in the fire, or the whirlwind, or the earthquake, whose ways are not as our ways, and who cannot be found out by searching among the things of the natural world. If agnosticism were confined to the opinion that physical science in the abstract can have no theological bearings, it would be as true as a similar statement in regard of his own department when made by a political economist or pure mathematician. But in actual fact it means more than this, it is the courteous disclaimer of a practised controversialist, who, while he declines the attempt to prove a negative, insinuates his conviction that, after all, with sufficient diligence a negative might be proved. And beyond this scientific agnosticism, we live among forms of what may be called a religious agnosticism, that is, forms of thought which, while retaining a minimum of what is supposed to be requisite

to constitute a religion, surrender in false deference to the spirit of the age as large a portion as they think possible of the metaphysics of their creed—all in unconsciousness that by so doing they empty it of moral significance as well. Such attempts are retrogressive, counter to the spirit of development; and a Christian may reasonably maintain that such systems are self-condemned by their mutual exclusiveness, while Christianity includes them, as a late complex result of evolution includes the succession of simpler elements which it has incorporated in itself. Generations, like individuals, have each their besetting temptation, and ours is to think from the high level of our average morality, that we can live in less close and conscious dependence upon the Divine assistance than the men of old, who through that assistance raised our morality to what it is. We have special need, therefore, to remind ourselves from time to time, that the specifically Christian virtues owe their essential character to our consciousness of the love of our Father in heaven, of the revelation of that love on Calvary, and of our capacity for living on the power of it, in virtue of its own free self-communication to our souls.

J. R. ILLINGWORTH, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Feb. 14th, 1881.

REFERENCES: xii. 43.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. v., p. 27. xii. 44-50.—F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John*, p. 341.

Chap. xii., ver. 47 (with ver. 22).—**"I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."**

CHRIST the Saviour.

Both these passages convey a truth of very great importance, and which requires to be fully received; and both taken together, give us the exact view of Christ's dealings with mankind. "He came not to judge the world, but to save the world"—here is our example of conduct. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son"—here is our warning, and at the same time our hope. And as both are true of the Lord Himself, so are they true also, in an inferior measure, of us also. We are set not to judge the world, but to save the world; not to strive to put down evil by force, but to labour with all meekness and long-suffering to overcome evil with good. Yet "know ye not that we shall judge angels?" that when the throne of the Son of Man is set for judgment, He will be surrounded with ten thousands of His saints; and that all the good will join with full assent in that great

sentence by which the Power of Evil shall be put down for. ever.

I. Our private severity against sinners should be ever checked by the remembrance of our own sin. We are so much more likely to be too violent than too merciful, to disguise our own angry passions under the name of a regard to public justice and public example, that whether in our own conduct, or in advising others, I know not that we can too strongly enforce the words of our Lord, that He came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

II. But are we then to suffer evil to go on unresisted, and leaving it to the judgment of Christ, take no pains to oppose it ourselves? Nay, we are to resist it all our lives long—to resist it even unto blood, if need be; but then it is our own blood that is spoken of, not that of those with whom we are contending; we may and must strive against sin in ourselves and in others, with all arms but those of violence. We are to imitate, not God as He is in Himself, when He takes to Him His great power, and reigns as the King of all the earth—for in this character no one hath seen God at any time, nor can we know Him till we see Him face to face in heaven; but we are to imitate God revealed to us in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son. We must strive in all things to follow His steps, who came not to judge the world but to save the world.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 121.

REFERENCES: xii. 47.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xix., p. 303.—W. Sanday, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 191, 201; T. T. Shore, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxii. p. 226.

Chap. xiii., ver. 1.—"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

I. IT was a test of love for His own that at the last Christ did not forget them in the agitation of His own departure. Would it have been a very strange thing, if alternately engrossed betwixt the solemn novelty of dying experience and the exciting prospect of a return to glory, His last hours had been spent in personal exercises of meditation and solitary prayer? But in efforts to console friends whom pain and fear and mortal wickedness oppressed, He almost forgot His own glorious impending exit out of wickedness and fear and pain. And so have all His scattered sheep been loved. He still stoops in person to feed us with the sacred paschal flesh and to revive our souls by the wine of His consolations.

II. His love for His own was tried at the last by their folly and perversity. The society of the apostles was not quite soothing society for the dying Christ. There is something pathetic in the patient tolerance which, to the last hour, He had to exhibit towards His closest friends. Here was, verily, love of Heaven's own temper—love imperial in its freedom, fed from no reservoirs of loveliness in the loved, but springing spontaneous as a fountain within the lover: the perfection of immortal strength wedded to the perfection of gentleness. Having loved them in their sins at first, He loved them unto the end.

III. One more test of Christ's enduring love is put into our hands by this evangelist. Throughout Jesus' public life one can trace a growing consciousness of His Divine dignity. His thoughts came to dwell more on it. His words became fuller of it. It was extremely natural that longer experience of the world should throw Him back for strength on the deep-seated certainty that He was not of this world, but came from above. Now by a law of human spirits all pain smarts more sorely for the recollection of pleasure, and so it is impossible not to feel that for the Son of the Blessed to remember that the Father had given all things into His hands at the very moment when He was called to empty Himself of all things, made the act of grace a more wonderful test of His unfailing love for men. He so realised Himself the associate and substitute of His criminal friends as to be one with them through love. "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end."

J. OSWALD DYKES, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 40.

REFERENCES: xiii. 1.—A. Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, p. 23; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vii., pp. 45, 54, 63, 71, 78; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 810; F. D. Maurice, *Gospel of St. John*, p. 341; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 61; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 170; J. Keble, *Sermons for Sundays after Trinity*, part ii., p. 451. xiii. 1-5.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 119. xiii. 1-11.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 342. xiii. 1-14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80.

Chap. xiii., vers. 1-17.

THE Washing of the Feet.

When we seek to wash a brother's feet we must be very careful about three things, which I give in the quaint way in which I have somewhere seen them expressed.

I. "The water must not be too hot." Above all things else this office of love must be performed in the spirit of meek-

ness. It would be well if, like the woman with the Lord, we could wash our erring brother's feet with our tears.

II. "Our own hands should be clean." To no purpose will we seek to win a brother from sin if we be ourselves guilty of the very thing which is blameable in him.

III. "We must be ready to submit our own feet to the process." The washing is to go all round. That which, when done by us, is a kindness to a brother, is equally a kindness when done by him to us.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Peter the Apostle*, p. 124.

REFERENCES: xiii. 1-17.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 350; W. Sanday, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 214. xiii. 2-5.—A. Rowland, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 114. xiii. 3-5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1499. xiii. 5.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 300; C. Stanford, *The Evening of our Lord's Ministry*, p. 21. xiii. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 612.

Chap. xiii., ver. 7.—**"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."**

THE Contrast between Present and Future Knowledge.

I. It is a very interesting thing to consider ourselves here as only in the childhood of our being, our full manhood being reserved for another and higher state of existence. Though now I can believe in the existence and presence of God, I have none of that perception and consciousness of it which I have of the existence and presence of a beloved friend who is standing at my side. I shall in the future life be sensible of my nearness to God; I shall have faculties for apprehending His manifested glory; no longer thrown upon faith, but privileged with sight—and the sight not that of a fleshly organ alone, however strengthened and refined, but mental, spiritual vision, as though God were Himself everywhere visible. But whilst there is more in the prospect of this change in the mode of acquiring knowledge, than in the most gorgeous beauties of the celestial city, to animate to the running the race set before us, you will allow that our knowledge must be necessarily defective and imperfect so long as we have only the dark glass and not the open vision: we have now neither the organs nor the opportunities for acquiring close and intimate acquaintance with spiritual things; and therefore what marvel if it have to be said of a thousand things into which we may be anxious to search, as Christ said to Peter in our text: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

II. Then there is to be a great increase in the material of

knowledge as well as a great change in the mode of its acquisition. Here we do not know as much of any one subject as our capacities could receive; knowing by study, not by sight, the amount of knowledge is always less than it might be, and greater upon one topic than another. It is therefore unavoidable that we have no harmonious views of truth. The elements which we have to combine are too small, and not being moreover on the same scale, will not fit with each other; hence the darkness, hence the enigma. But hereafter we shall cease thus to know in part of every subject that can minister to happiness; we shall know as much as we are capable of knowing. Therefore will there be no longer any void, no longer a disproportion of what we know of one thing and what of another. Hence, will the separate truths blend in one harmonious whole, and all enigma will cease, though wonder upon wonder have yet to be unravelled. It is not that we should embrace all truth, for that is the property of the Divine Being alone; but it is the having every capacity full even as God has, so that truth will always present one unclouded panorama, bounded indeed, but beautifully distinct, and each part contributing to the general splendour.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2271.

REFERENCES: xiii. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1293; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 166; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 119; vol. xi., p. 365; vol. xvi., p. 152; H. P. Liddon, *Christmastide Sermons*, p. 191; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 417; J. Jackson Wray, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 8; C. J. Vaughan, *Last Words at Doncaster*, p. 72.

Chap. xiii., ver. 8.—"Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

I. IF we look to the conclusions to be drawn from this touching scene, the first that strikes the mind is our Lord's love in cleansing sinners. The scene illustrates some of the most marked features, distinguishing the later from the earlier manifestations of God's love. The revelations of God's holiness and power chiefly pervade the Old Testament. But in the Gospels these awful attributes, though not withdrawn, are yet veiled beneath the humiliation of God.

II. Most important conclusions are to be drawn from this scene, as to some material points in the work of repentance. It teaches us that the real cleansing of one portion of our being is the cleansing of the whole. There can be no forgiveness of one sin which does not involve forgiveness of the whole man.

It is only as the entire soul is capable of the grace of repentance, that any portion of the soul is capable of it. Repentance therefore must be perfect in its aim and tendency, though imperfect in degree. Again, this scene illustrates the momentous truth that repentance is not merely the conviction of sin, nor merely the purpose to amend, nor merely confession. True repentance is the sense of sin as done against love, against tenderness, mourned by a heart that has begun to love in return.

III. There is here also a lesson to be learnt, not merely as to our own state before God, but also as to our duties towards others. Each earnest loving act to cleanse away from a redeemed humanity its sores and stains, to mitigate its sufferings, to hide its shame, to promote its peace, is a renewing of the mysterious scene of mercy of that eventful night, a repetition of the washing of the upper chamber, of the night of the agony. Each form of misery that passes before us in our path through life, is a call to remember that amazing scene of tender self-humiliation, a call to pause and consider how best to apply the healing of His grace, Who now is working out the purposes of redeeming love through the ministrations of His servants, to all of whom He hath said, "I have given you an example, that ye *should* do as I have done unto you."

T. T. CARTER, *Sermons*, p. 83.

REFERENCE: xiii. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 926.

Chap. xiii., vers. 8-10.

I. THIS symbol teaches us: (1) that the nature of Christian purity consists in the cleansing of the heart from the betrayal spirit, and (2) that the love in the Saviour which sacrificed itself is the cleansing power.

II. The perfectness of Christian purity. (1) The purifying must pervade the lowest powers of life. (2) The purifying must advance with advancing life.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 317.

Chap. xiii., ver. 10.—"Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit," etc.

THE Bathed must yet be Cleansed.

Even he that has plunged into the love of Christ and Christ's law, will yet soil his feet as he walks through the world, and will need perpetually to be washed as the disciples were washed

on the evening of the Last Supper. In the text our Lord declared that He would wash the defilement of the feet in the ways of the world, and not merely cleanse once for all, but ever renew the cleansing as it was needed.

I. It is the sin which remains on the conscience that withers and destroys all religious life. It is the sin which, whether great or small in itself, we will not repent of; it is the sin which we are too proud to set right, that really keeps us from our Saviour. To be defeated in the spiritual warfare is a serious matter; but to keep away from the voice of the Captain, to be unwilling to fight any more, to be too much ashamed or too proud to come back and submit to His will, this is worse than all defeats. But meanwhile our Lord knows full well that we shall often be taken in all manner of faults, and He is ready to cleanse us the moment we come back to Him. If we have been separated from Him for ever so little, His heart goes out to meet us the moment we return. As the father met the prodigal son, so our Lord sees us and welcomes us when we are yet a great way off.

II. It is the readiness of repentance that marks the childlike character. Little children are easily led away, but they are easily made sorry, and easily are they brought to seek forgiveness from offended parents. And this is one of the ways in which Christians are to resemble little children. It is readiness of repentance which marks the loving temper. The self-contained, cold character feels no need of forgiveness. Such an one cannot bear to accept forgiveness, but always desires to earn it. But the loving character knows that nothing earns forgiveness so surely, so truly, as seeking for it, and all other earning should follow, not precede. If you have done wrong, know that this wrong-doing will not quench the smoking flax, but that delay in coming to Christ will. Know this, and know too that instant repentance brings you instant forgiveness; nay, more than forgiveness, love and approval and help from the Lord of all power and might.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 116.

WHOM does Christ pronounce Clean?

Consider what it was in our Lord's Apostles that made Him say to them that, with one exception, they were all clean.

I. It certainly was not because they were free from sin altogether. The Gospels contain many instances of faults, even

amongst the most eminent of their number, which prove quite clearly that they were far from perfect. There were marks of ambition, of violence, of worldly-mindedness in their characters, which on different occasions drew forth our Lord's reproof. But yet He calls them clean, because as he said to them that very same evening, "Ye are they who have continued with Me" in my temptations. They were men who when many others had gone back and walked no more with Him, and when they themselves did not understand aright those words of their Lord which had given so much offence, yet replied to Him when He asked them, "Will ye also go away?' "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." He calls them clean therefore, because their faith in Him had not failed; but they had continued with Him in all His temptations, and loved Him better than any other service.

II. If this is the case then, we may think at first sight that we too are all clean, because our faith in Christ has never failed us, and we have continued in His service ever since we were born. And so, indeed, we might think justly if our notions of faith were the same as those of the Scripture. But many of us cannot be said, like the Apostles, to have continued with Christ in His temptations, for we have never known what it is to struggle against temptation for Christ's sake. We have never made it our deliberate choice to abide with Him, let who would forsake Him, because we were sure that He had the words of eternal life. However much then we may be called Christians, and however little we have ever doubted the fact of Christ's life and death, we cannot on that account lay claim to that true and lively faith which Christ saw in His eleven disciples, and for which He did not hesitate to pronounce them to be "clean every whit." We are not clean, indeed, too many of us; but that Gospel which is preached unto us holds out to every one of the children of men who need it, a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, a means whereby our sins, though scarlet, may be made as white as snow, and we, like the Apostles, may stand in the sight of God as "clean every whit."

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 127.

REFERENCES: xiii. 10.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 146; D. Fraser, *Metaphors of the Gospels*, p. 391. xiii. 12-14.—J. H. Thorn, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 3rd series, p. 316. xiii. 12-15. *Expository Sermons on the New Testament*, p. 120. xiii. 12-20.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 351.

Chap. xiii., vers. 13, 14.—"**Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.**"

CONSIDERATION for the Poor.

I. It must have been a solemn lesson which our Lord chose to teach so earnestly on that last night of His presence with His disciples; and which He not only gave in words, but expressed in a most significant action, to impress it the deeper on their minds and ours. Observe the connection of the words of the Evangelist, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God"—what did He upon this knowledge? Did He reveal to them some high mysteries concerning the Divine nature, such as kings and prophets and sages had long desired to learn? No; "He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." This was what Jesus did, "Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God." Surely no diviner comment could be given upon the words of the Scriptures that "God is love, and He who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in Him." A command so given and enforced, must surely have been of the deepest importance.

II. I call this text a command to one particular kind of love—the love of our poorer brethren. It is sometimes said that it was a command to practise humility; and so it was, in one sense of the word, but it was also meant to teach us to perform duties of kindness, even of the most humble sort, to those who need them the most—not to shrink from the meanest offices in visiting and relieving the bodily wants and sufferings of the poor.

It is those little words, "one another" which express so much, and which we are so apt to lose sight of. These words show that the rich and the poor are members one of another, not two distinct castes—I had almost said two distinct races. These words ought to take away that feeling of merit which we are but too apt to attach to our charity. No man is proud of being kind to his brother or his near friend; he would only be ashamed of himself if he were not kind. So, if we felt aright to the poor, that they are, in the highest of all relations our brethren, should we not fully enter into the spirit of the

Apostle's words, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another?"

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 111.

REFERENCES: xiii. 13, 14.—W. Anderson, *Discourses*, p. 261.—J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 7th series, p. 26. xiii. 14, 15.—E. W. Shalders, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 328. xiii. 15.—A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 60; G. G. Bradley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 177; Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 209.

Chap. xiii., ver. 17.—**"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."**

ALL Light Good.

I. Light of any kind invariably throws light upon duty, and if we know anything, we are sure to have thereby a clearer knowledge of right from wrong. The mere awakening of the understanding must awaken the conscience in some degree. You cannot gain more intellectual power without also gaining moral light. Just as the coming of the daylight shows you the beauty of Nature, at the same time that it shows you the position of surrounding objects, so, too, even the merest science must reveal in some slight degree the beauty of the will of God.

II. I know not how those shall be judged who have never had any such aid, and have therefore sunk into the condition of brute beasts. God, who seeth not as man seeth, will one day do absolute justice to all, and their unhappy lot shall meet at once with His unbounded mercy and His unerring judgment. But their condition proves to us that the education which we obtain from intercourse with one another is the appointed machinery chosen by His Providence for fashioning our hearts according to His will. Even those who have never yet been touched at heart by the power of His Word, written or spoken, even souls that have not yet opened to receive His revealed truth; even those who have never heard of Christ, or from whose cold and hard hearts that name has glided off without a trace; even they have received a precious gift, if their understandings have been awakened by the light of the knowledge of this present world. And for that gift they will certainly be responsible.

III. The text also brings us this message; trifle not with the conscience. Trifle not with the one voice which always speaks with the authority of Heaven, the one guide which is commissioned to bring you to Christ. Remember that the voice within is the very voice of God; and if you play false with that, you are a traitor to your Master.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 243.

KNOWLEDGE of God's Will without Obedience.

Do we not often try to persuade ourselves that to feel religiously, to confess our love of religion and to be able to talk of religion, will stand in the place of careful obedience, of that self-denial which is the very substance of true practical religion. Alas! that religion, which is so delightful as a vision, should be so distasteful as a reality. Yet so it is, whether we are aware of the fact or not.

I. The multitude of men even who profess religion are in this state of mind. We will take the case of those who are in better circumstances than the mass of the community. They are well educated and taught; they have few distresses in life, or are able to get over them by the variety of their occupations, by the spirits which attend good health, or at least by the lapse of time. They go on respectably and happily, with the same general tastes and habits which they would have had if the Gospel had not been given them. Their religion is based upon self and the world, a mere civilisation.

II. Take again another description of them. They have perhaps turned their attention to the means of promoting the happiness of their fellow-creatures, and have formed a system of morality and religion of their own. Then they come to Scripture. They are much struck with the high tone of its precepts, and the beauty of its teaching. They *know* them and that is enough; but as for *doing* them, they have nothing of this right spirit. The spread of knowledge bringing in its train a selfish temperance, a selfish peaceableness, a selfish benevolence, the morality of expedience, this satisfies them.

III. Is it not one of the commonest excuses made by the poor for irreligion, that they have had no education? As if to know much were a necessary step for right practice. Anyone who thinks it enough to come to church to learn God's will, but does not bear in mind to do it in his daily conduct, is a fool in His sight who maketh the wisdom of this world foolishness.

IV. When a man complains of his hardness of heart or weakness of purpose, let him see to it, whether this complaint is more than a mere pretence to quiet his conscience which is frightened at his putting off repentance; or again, more than a mere idle word, said half in jest and half in compunction. As we desire to enter into life, let us come to Christ continually for the true foundations of true Christian faith—humbleness of mind and earnestness.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 27.

REFERENCES: xiii. 17.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 346; Swan, *Short Sermons*, p. 172. xiii. 18.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 167. xiii. 21.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 210; vol. xix., p. 126. xiii. 21-30.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 371.

Chap. xiii., ver. 23.—**"There was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved."**

COMMUNION with Christ.

What name is more blessed than this title by which St. John conceals himself? Who was ever more favoured than he? It was a sweet memory to him, in his old and solitary age, to remember that night of awe, in which he lay upon the bosom of his Lord. And yet it was doubtless for some deeper reason that the evangelist wrote these words. It was not to publish abroad his own peculiar favours, nor to prefer himself to others in his Master's presence. It was perhaps to give warrant to the certainty of his written testimony; but it was surely to reveal also the deep and Divine mysteries of love which lie hid in the incarnation of the Eternal Word.

I. First we here see, as by a parable, the love of the Son of God in the mystery of His own incarnation. Our infirmity leans upon His might; our manhood upon His Godhead. There is a man in the bosom of God. Our nature is in glory. As we say at the altar in the end of our Christian sacrifice, "For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father."

II. But again, we may see here His love in the salvation of His elect. When He took our manhood into God, it was that He might take us also unto Himself. The glorious body of the Word made flesh is the centre of His mystical body, and to it He joins us one by one. We who were by nature dead in trespasses and sin, outcasts and without God in the world, are gathered together from all ages and all lands unto Himself. All these may be said to lean upon Him who is their only strength, hope and solace—they who have walked stedfast with Him from childhood, and live on unconscious of this rough outer life which beats upon the penitent; penitents who, after long wanderings past, find the peace and bliss of an eternal absolution; mourners who feel no more the burden of the Cross, while He bears up both it and them; and all who with ardent desire yearn for the coming of His kingdom, and are stayed with "white raiment" and a sense of His ever-present love. In the midst of all sorrows, trials and temptations they are at

peace; in all the unrest of this tumultuous and weary world, they rest on Him. The one great gift that all alike enjoy, is a sense of repose, a placid calm of heart, a stay upon which they lean with all the weight of their whole spiritual life. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 273.

WE may learn here:—

I. That love is one of the very earliest qualities of life consecrated to Christ.

II. Love is often content to walk in quiet well-trodden paths.

III. Though love is thus content, there are times in its life, when love is very deep and true, when it shows an inventiveness which leads to the result that love not seldom beats out new tracts for itself.

IV. Even love is prone to its own evil. Love has to guard itself against a burning anger at evil.

V. Love must ever first recognise the will of the Lord, if zeal is to work well in carrying out that will.

T. GASQUOINE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 161.

REFERENCES: xiii. 23.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 423; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 330; J. Morgan, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 373. xiii. 26.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 366. xiii. 30.—*Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 286. xiii. 31.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, vol. ii., p. 544. xiii. 31-35.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 283. xiii. 33.—J. Keble, *Sermons for Holy Week*, p. 91. xiii. 33.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 72; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 238; W. H. Jellie, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 296.

Chap. xiii., ver. 34.—**"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."**

I. THE new commandment has been once for all uttered—the new law is given; and each generation, at whatever point of the advance to its fulfilment God may have ordained its place, is bound by it equally. Every individual Christian lives under the force of that law, and is responsible to Him for obedience to it. Such obedience is, in fact, each generation's portion of that upward work into fulness of love, which the Holy Spirit is carrying on in the whole race. And the same may be said of every individual Christian; his obedience to Christ's law of love is his contribution towards the universal recognition of that law, in God's good time. No generation, no man stands

alone. Even the humblest may contribute something, and all are bound for their own lives, and for God's great work, to do their utmost in the matter.

II. Now, our Saviour has not left this, His new commandment, in mere abstract vagueness; He has fixed it on us, and brought it home to our consciences by a definite and specified pattern: "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Of what kind was His love to us? (1) It was a self-denying love. (2) It was a boundless love. (3) It was a love of gentleness and courtesy. If we would love one another as He loved us, there is but one effectual instrument, but one genuine spring of such love. No mere admiration will effect it; no mere sensibility will call it forth; no romance of benevolence will keep it up; it can come from nothing but faith in Him; that faith which purifies the heart. It alone is powerful to dethrone self in a man by setting up Christ instead, and until self is put down within, there can be no real presence of love, and none of its genuine fruits; until Christ reigns in a man's heart there can be no imitation of His love, for it will never be understood by me till I behold it as a personal matter; till I measure its height by the depth of my unworthiness of it, its vastness by my own nothingness.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 223.

I. WHEN our Lord said "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another," He appealed directly to the personal experience of those to whom He spoke. It was the eleven alone who could know to what extent He had loved, for they alone had felt His love. They had lived in sweet familiar intercourse with Him for some years. They had known His care, His kindness, His gentleness, His patience, His long-suffering, and it is not too much to say that they had never known anything like it. It is plain that our Lord intended this original experience of the eleven to become generally intelligible to vast multitudes who had never shared their experience.

II. As long as we regard the love of Jesus as a thing only of the past, displayed once for all, even though we may believe ourselves to have been the objects of it, I think it will have but little power on our hearts or conduct. What is it, then, that is wanting to make the love operative and effectual? A very important question, involving the essence of the whole matter. The element that is wanting, then, is clearly this: to see in the love of Jesus for His disciples, not only a love in which we

were concerned, and a love embracing us; not only the love He evidenced when He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word"; but a love still going forth, still reaching out to us, of which love all that was done by the Christ of history was, so to say, the pattern and the image. Now, it is impossible that the love of Christ could be thus energetic and operative if He was nothing more than man, however great. You do not and cannot feel any satisfaction or any real benefit from the present love, which you believe to be extended towards you by your deceased relatives. You would not like to think that they felt no such love, but whether they do or not, it is impossible, in any true sense, to reciprocrate that love, because you have now no evidence of its going forth towards you. But Christ's love has been with you from the first day of your life till now. It has not been merely an utterance recorded in the history of a great tragedy which was enacted eighteen hundred years ago; but it has been shown to you, it has been felt by you under ten thousand special dealings with you in your own inmost being, of which you alone are conscious and all the world besides is ignorant. The love which the life and death of Christ displayed was none other than the love of God. If this was not the love of Christ, then the utterance "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another," becomes meaningless and trivial. It no longer corresponds with the precept, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," but substitutes in the place of a Divine standard of love a merely human and earthly standard.

S. LEATHES, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 532.

REFERENCES: xiii. 34.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 309; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 133; J. H. Wilson, *The Gospel and its Fruits*, p. 233.

Chap. xiii., vers. 34, 35.—"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another," etc.

I. LOOK at the command of brotherly love as it was given in old time. It was contained in the last six of the Ten Commandments; or putting on one side the fifth commandment as being of a peculiar kind, referring to one particular duty and not to our duty to our neighbour in general, we may say that the command to love one another is contained in the last five commandments of the decalogue. All these commandments, you will observe, are employed in telling us what we may *not*

do, saying nothing of the things which we ought to do. The actual form of the law of loving our neighbours, as given in the Old Testament, was a prohibitory law; not an active law of love depending for its force upon a spring of love within, but a law which, if obeyed according to the letter, would sunder only certain offences, and might be kept thus by a man whose heart was as hard as a flint.

II. If you examine the precepts of loving our neighbours, as given by the Lord Jesus Christ, I think you will perceive that the peculiarity and the strength of them consist in this very thing, that they imply active, self-denying exertions for our brother's good. That love is emphatically Christian which, setting aside all consideration of self-advantage, and running beyond the mere negative duty of doing our neighbour no wrong, goes forth with activity, life, and zeal to show itself in works of mercy and deeds of loving-kindness to our brethren. The commandment was *new* because Christ had only then come to explain it; it was *new* because it could not have been conceived before His life exhibited its meaning; it was new because the love which He showed was something altogether beyond the power of man to have imagined for himself; and, as in science we reckon him to be the discoverer of a new law who rises above the guesses and glimpses of his predecessors, and establishes upon new ground, and in a manner which can never afterwards be questioned, some great principle which had been partly conceived before; so I think we may say that the law of brotherly love, as illustrated by the example of our Lord, the law of self-denying, active efforts for our brother's good, the law which stamps the great principle of selfishness as a vile and execrable principle, might be truly described as a new commandment which Christ gave to His disciples.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 258.

REFERENCES: xiii. 34-35.—B. Dale, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 33. xiii. 35.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 18. xiii. 36.—*Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 22. xiii. 36-38.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 392.

Chap. xiii., ver. 37.—"Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now?"

THE Withheld Completions of Life.

There are certain conditions which are to all good life just what the flower is to the plant. They furnish it its natural completion. They crown its struggles with a manifest success.

These conditions of peace and pleasure are the life's success. But when the life, conscious of the character out of which these conditions ought to come, finds that they do not come, finds that it pauses on the brink of its completion and cannot blossom, then comes bewilderment, then come impatient questionings and doubts. This is the state of many lives, especially about religious things.

I. In answer to our wondering question "What does it mean?" there are two things to be said. The first is this: that such a suspension of the legitimate result, this failure of the flower to complete the plant, does show beyond all doubt a real condition of disorder. The world is broken and disordered, that is the first thing that is meant when you help men, and they scorn you, when the world's benefactors are neglected or despised. And secondly, there is a blessing which may come to a man even out of the withholding of the legitimate completion of his service. It may throw him back upon the nature of the act itself, and compel him to find his satisfaction there.

II. The plant grows on towards its appointed flower, but before the blossom comes some hand is laid upon it, and the day of its blossoming is delayed. The emotional and affectional conditions are the natural flower of the wills and dedications of our life. But we resolve, we dedicate ourselves, and though the prophecy and the hope immediately begin to assert themselves all through us, the joy, the peace, the calmness of assurance, does not come. The ideal life, the life of full completions, haunts us all. Nothing can really haunt us except what we have the beginning of, the native capacity for, however hindered, in ourselves. Jesus does not blame Peter when he impetuously begs that he may follow Him now. He bids him wait and he shall follow Him some day. But we can see that the value of his waiting lies in the certainty that he shall follow, and the value of his following when it comes will be in the fact that he has waited. So if we take all Christ's culture, we are sure that our life on earth may get already the inspiration of the heaven for which we are training, and our life in heaven may keep for ever the blessing of the earth in which we were trained.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 19.

REFERENCES: xiii. 37.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 416; J. Keble, *Sermons for Holy Week*, p. 36. xiii. 37, 38.—C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons Chiefly Practical*, p. 103.

Chap. xiv., ver. 1.—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

CONSIDER the connection between believing in God and believing in Jesus Christ.

I. Note first that the difficulty which men find in their way when asked to believe in Christ arises from the supernatural character of His manifestation and working. Take this away and there would be no difficulty for them in believing in Christ, no more difficulty in believing in Him than they have in believing in Socrates or Plato. Admitting that Jesus Christ was no more than a man, that His birth was that of an ordinary mortal, that He lived and died as any other man might, and that being dead and buried, He rests in the grave and was never seen again upon earth; admitting all this, you remove the whole difficulty which the unbeliever says he finds in the way of His believing in Christ, and he will then perhaps join you, in extolling the virtues, in admiring the character and in praising the conduct of Jesus of Nazareth. But such admissions cannot be made. A Christ divested of the supernatural is not the Christ whom the Gospels invite us to believe in, no such being, in fact, ever existed. If these men profess to believe in God, they by that very profession bring themselves under obligation to examine carefully and impartially the historical evidence on which Christianity rests its claim. If God be what they say they believe Him to be, then with Him all things are possible, and nothing can be more probable than that He should reveal Himself to His intelligent creatures, and by many infallible proofs show them that it is indeed He who speaks unto them. They are thus by their own premisses bound to examine the evidences of Christianity, and if these are found to stand the test, they are bound as they believe in God to believe also in Jesus Christ.

II. Advancing a step further, I would now go on to affirm that apart from the revelation of God in and through Jesus Christ, it may be doubted if man can believe in God in any real sense, or as He is. Jesus Christ presents Himself as the Revealer of God to men. It is to Christ then that we are to look for instruction in the knowledge of God, and it is only as we believe in Him, and receive out of that fulness of wisdom and knowledge which is in Him, that we shall so acquaint ourselves with God as really and intelligently to believe in Him. It is only a little way that the light of nature can guide

us in the search after God, and a man dependent solely upon that light can hardly be said to believe in God as He is.

III. It is Christ alone who supplies what is wanted for a religion for man. Man needs (1) an incarnation, (2) an atonement. Man, with his conscious weakness and his deep wants, and that sore hunger of the soul which no viands the earth furnishes can fill, and that terrible sense of guilt which oppresses the spirit and fills him with that fear which hath torment, finds in Christ at length that which meets his need and satisfies his convictions, and calms his fears, and gives peace to his conscience, and lifts him up from despair to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

W. L. ALEXANDER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 161.

SOMETHING is wanting then, till the believer in God is a believer also in Christ. This is our subject.

I. Now some one might say, Look at the saints of the Old Testament! What grace of reverence, of affiance, of holy aspiration, was lacking in the patriarch Abraham, or in the poet king of the Psalms? And yet Christ was not manifested to them. We venture to dispute the very fact taken for granted. The psalmist, the prophet, the patriarch, yea, the very first father himself, lived and prayed and worshipped in the shadow cast before of Him that should come.

II. Or you might come nearer home, and speak of men who, in this century or the last, have not only led good lives, but have had many pious feelings, and done many beneficent works, without realising what we should call the fulness of the Christian faith. In examples such as these, it is but truth to remember that men thus dispensing with Christ are yet unspeakably indebted to Him. The very idea of God as our Father comes from revelation. It is one ray of that Divine truth which is reflected now in a thousand unconscious or ungrateful intellects.

III. Still, you may say, having made this great revelation, may not Christ Himself disappear? It is an obvious answer, and surely a just one, to such reasonings as these: We cannot take Christ by halves; if Christ said one thing from God, He said all things.

IV. Observe too how the particular truth received, no less than the accompanying doctrine objected to, runs up into matters which we can neither dispute as facts nor yet, apart from God, settle. No man dispenses with or disparages the Cross without being a definite loser in some feature of the

Christian character. Where there is a reluctance to rely on Christ alone for forgiveness, you will generally perceive one of two great deficiencies: (1) There is often a feeble sense of the sinfulness of sin; (2) there is often a want of true tenderness towards sinners.

V. Nor is it only in this negative aspect that we perceive the distinctive value of faith in Christ. God, in arranging that we should receive this greatest, this most profound of His gifts, forgiveness and reconciliation, through another, His Divine, His Incarnate Son, has not only made the Gospel of one piece with His dealing with us in this life, but has also given a charm and pathos to the Gospel which it could not otherwise have possessed. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 11.

I. WHAT do we mean, apart from the Christian revelation, when we say we believe in God? We mean that we believe in infinite thought, infinite intelligence, and that all things of which we are conscious, and especially all thought, are derived from this omnipresent thought; nay, are parts of it. We believe in absolute, eternal, infinite, intelligence, exercising itself in the incessant movement of thought, when we believe in God. But if that is all we believe we are only Pantheists. We believe in God not only as infinite thought and life, but as infinite goodness. He is a moral Being; He is absolute Holiness, Truth, Justice, and Beauty; and wherever these things are, in matters of the spirit or the intellect, they are there by Him and through Him. But where thought and life and moral character are, we have also a will, and where there is a will with these things, we have that which we call personality. We believe in God and conceive Him then as personal. Hence there springs up the idea of God as the moral Governor of the world and our personal King, and in God as such we believe.

II. All humanity is lifted by Christ's revelation into union with divinity. Fancy the power of that in life. It does not only exalt it, regenerate it, set it on fire, it makes it completely beautiful. And above all, it fills it with unspeakable love. It binds God and man together like husband and wife, like two beings who, loving one another with perfect sympathy, dwell in one another, and are not two, but one being. That is the faith of the Christian concerning God and man. Christ called God our Father, and made Fatherhood on His side and childhood on

ours, the terms that expressed our relation of love to God, and His relation of love to us. God is still to us the infinite thought, and will, and life, and righteousness, by which the material and spiritual universe consists; but in His relation to us as Father, He thinks for us and lives in us, and wills in our behalf, and makes Himself our righteousness. Therefore we not only worship and reverence Him; we also love Him. How? With all our soul and mind and strength, with all the love of children. And now, in being loved by God, and in being able and joyous to love Him, our deepest need is satisfied, our deepest longing quenched. The very root of our heart is watered with the dew of this belief. God is love, and we love Him. It has transfigured all humanity. And that expanded and ennobled belief is the work of Christ. What wonder that He said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

S. A. BROOKE, *The Spirit of the Christian Life*, p. 305.

REFERENCES: xiv. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 730; W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 40. xiv. 1-3.—D. Davies, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 10. xiv. 1-4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1741; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 244; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 200; C. Stanford, *The Evening of our Lord's Ministry*, p. 72. xiv. 1-14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 224; A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 385.

Chap. xiv., ver. 2.—"If it were not so, I would have told you."

THE truthfulness of Jesus Christ.

I. These words were an appeal to the disciples' knowledge of Christ. Had He ever painted His discipleship in false colours? Had He kept back any hard terms? Had He softened down any harsh conditions, that He might parade among His followers as One whom it was policy to conciliate? "One thing thou lackest," He had said to the rich young ruler, and that one thing was the sacrifice of his all. It was so in everything. The same voice which said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," would have said, if it was the truth: I have no revelation and no promise, of another "life." I can but speak of truth and of duty. I can but share with you the sorrows of time, and leave you at the gate of that mystery which none can solve—what, or whether anything, shall be hereafter.

II. "If it were not so, I would have told you"—and in the telling there would have lain for Me no defeat and no discomfiture. I might still have come into the life; I might still have been the Comforter, the Sympathiser, and the Friend. If,

then, He does *not* tell us that there is no life beyond this life—shall we not believe that He speaks that He doth know? I will insult the intelligence of no man by supposing that he will accuse Jesus Christ—whose character (I speak as a man) he knows perfectly well by biography and by history—of wilfully fabricating revelations of the truth of which He Himself was not persuaded. Either he must say, if he is a man of sense and honesty, "We have not His real words," or he must say, "He was Himself deluded." The third thing he durst not say—durst not, I mean, for his intellectual character's sake—"Though He knew that it was so, yet He said it." The hearing ear is from above; but prayer will draw down the gift. If we believe in the home above; if we believe that Jesus lives; if we believe that He will come again to receive us unto Himself—let us look now at the things not seen but eternal, let us live the life now which alone can survive death.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 361.

MAN's hope of immortality uncontradicted by God.

I. Our position with God is similar to that in which the disciples stood to Christ—we are looking to Him for the fulfilment of hopes which reach beyond our present life.

II. The same considerations which would have led Christ to undeceive His disciples, had they been in error, apply to God in His position to us. These reasons fall under a twofold division—those which lie in God's own character, and those which lie in the relation between Him and us. Whatever could press on Christ as a moral obligation to speak out to His disciples, would lead us to expect that, if we were deceiving ourselves, God would speak out to us.

J. KER, *Sermons*, p. 245.

REFERENCES: xiv. 2.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 72; *Homilist*, vol. v., p. 87; T. S. Berry, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 397; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 363; A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 124; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 1; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 97. xiv. 2-3.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 127; vol. ix., p. 90.

Chap. xiv., ver. 2.—"I go to prepare a place for you."

I. HAD the Lord Jesus remained with us here below, various great ends of His mission must have rested unfulfilled. (1) Both His crucifixion and His resurrection were but steps in the way of the greatest event of His whole appointed course—the glorification of His manhood and of us in Him. Had He remained below, we may not say that this *could* not have been;

because it is not for us to limit God to any defined place in His workings; but according to His own declaration, it *would* not have been. (2) Again, it was not the purpose of God in redemption merely to clear us from guilt, nor merely to place us in acceptance, but to renew us after the Divine likeness—to build up again, infinitely more glorious for the conflict with sin and suffering, that image which in our first parents had been ruined. And this, our Lord again and again taught His disciples, could not be accomplished without His being taken from them. It was to be the especial work of the Holy Spirit, and this Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Builder-up and Strengthener of Mankind, would not come unless our Lord first went to the Father. (3) Moreover, the Ascension was necessary for the manifestation of Christ's sovereignty. No manifestation of majesty here below could ever have been equivalent to the resumption by Him of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was—still less to the accession of glory with which Redemption has crowned Him. (4) Another great necessity for our Lord's removal from us, is the work of His High Priesthood in heaven.

II. Consider the results of the Ascension with a view to our own faith and practice. (1) It is the token to us of the entire acceptance of the Saviour's finished work in our nature. (2) The Ascension of our Lord should draw our present thoughts and affections to the place whither He is gone before. If we really love our Saviour, if His glorified humanity is to us the spring of our joys, and the centre of our interests, the world may catch our fleeting thoughts and employ our less earnest attentions, but He will have all our serious determinations, all our deepest affections; the world may be our tabernacle, but the place where He is will be our home.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 366.

Chap. xiv., ver. 2.—"In My Father's house are many mansions."

I. OUR Lord teaches us to connect with heaven the thought of permanence. It is a place of mansions.

II. Our Lord teaches us to connect with heaven the thought of extent and variety. It has *many* mansions.

III. Our Lord further teaches us to connect with the heavenly world the thought of unity. It is a *house* of many mansions.

IV. Our Lord teaches us to carry to the thought of heaven a filial heart. It is the Father's house, a paternal home.

V. Our Lord has taught us to connect heaven with the

thought of Himself—"My" Father's house. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

J. KER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 247.

REFERENCES: xiv. 2.—J. S. Davies, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 321; J. H. Hitchens, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p 6; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 72; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 6th series, p. 141. xiv. 2, 3.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 228; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 87. xiv. 2-4. —*Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 583.

Chap. xiv., ver. 3.—**"That where I am, there ye may be also."**

WITH Christ for Ever.

I. This whole passage is beautifully calculated to place in their right proportions that hope which every one feels of meeting again in heaven those that are gone before us, and the one all-satisfying anticipation of being with Christ. I feel persuaded that many are far too much afraid of dwelling on the idea of our knowing and loving and enjoying one another again in the future state. I believe, if rightly understood, the danger lies more on the side of thinking of it too little, than of magnifying it too much. Are we not to know all things—to know even as we are known, and if all things, then certainly one another?

II. But perhaps the real mistake and confusion of thought is in this, that we do not connect and identify the saints, as we ought to do, with Christ. Now it is a deep mystery, but it is a most certain fact, that Christ is not a complete Christ without His members. We know and admire Christ in every one of His members, and every one of His members in Christ, and so the very fact of the rejoining of the departed, which some think to be contravened by the text, is by the text promoted and established, and is actually in the words when Christ says, "That where I am, there ye may be also."

III. The nearest approach we can make to the idea of glory lies, I think, in the text. Let any child of God take what Christ's felt presence has been to his soul, in its most favoured season of spiritual communion. Let him conceive that sweet ecstasy rid of its clogs—multiplied a thousand-fold, and perpetuated for ever—and then this, not any picture of colour or shape, place or circumstance, will be the closest approximation he can make to a true imagination of the heavenly state. He will see how independent everlasting happiness becomes of those things of which the natural heart generally makes it to consist; and how there is enough, and more than enough, for

eternity in that single assurance, "Where I am, there ye shall be also."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 31.

REFERENCE: xiv. 5, 6.—H. P. Liddon, *Christmastide Sermons*, p. 18.

Chap. xiv., ver. 6.—**"Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life."**

CHRIST the Way.

I. If it be asked where this way begins, and whither it goes, the answer is evident. It begins in the cold, dark, desolate region, into which sin has thrown the moral and material condition of every living man. And it goes along a course of ever-nearing communion with God—through many stages of prayer, and devout thought and humiliation and assimilation to the character of God, up to the many mansions of the Father's house.

II. There were three difficulties which had to be overcome in the return of a guilty creature to his God. (1) A road must be made clear before the love of God could travel without trespassing on God's justice. (2) The false and alien mind of man must be willing to occupy the road when it was made. (3) The returning man must be fit for the happiness to which he is restored. To remove the first obstacle, Jesus, in His own person, and by His own vile death, harmonised the attributes of God. To do away with the second, the commanding spirit works in His sovereignty, which makes willing in the day of His power. To destroy the third, the mediatorial throne is planted on the way, to shed beauty and glory on everything which passes by it, and which acknowledges its efficacy. But over each barrier, rased to the ground, Christ's banner floats, "I am the Way."

III. Immediately you are in the way, you find yourself in a state of progress. Marvellously you will feel your thoughts and affections begin to rise. Evidences you cannot mistake will tell you you are in the way. Old things will be dwindling behind you into insignificance in the distance, and new things will be brought to you in the present. You will understand the essential progressiveness of the grace of God, and you will need no human voice to explain to you what that means, "I am the Way."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1868, p. 229.

CHRIST the Truth.

I. The truth of Christ was an attribute above all others

essential to the offices which He undertook to fulfil. I shall take five of these offices. (1) That of a witness. What is a witness without truth? (2) The substance of that of which the whole of the Old Testament was the shadow. But the substance of anything is the truth of anything. Therefore, Christ is Truth. (3) The founder of a faith very different from all others which ever appeared upon this earth. Its precepts are the strictest—its doctrines are the loftiest—its consolations are the strongest. Now what intense veracity did that require in Him. (4) Christ is His people's truth, His people's righteousness. And what must be the truth of Him who was to be the Truth of the whole world? (5) Christ is Judge. How unspeakably momentous it is that in the last great division of all human destiny, the Judge should be true.

II. There are three empires of truth—the intellectual, the moral, and the spiritual. (1) I doubt whether any mind ever attains the highest order of intellect without an acquaintance with Jesus Christ. For if everything took its rise in the mind of Christ, then the true science of every subject must revert to Christ. (2) Christ is the Sun, the centre of moral Truth. In proportion as nations have departed from Christ, they have wandered out of the orbit of truth. And every man, as he dwells more with Christ, grows in rectitude of conduct and integrity of practice. (3) Christ is that "Amen" in the Revelation which clenches and ratifies to men the whole scroll of love. And every glimpse of joy, and every flood of sorrow in a believer's heart, coming and working its appointed purpose there, just according to the chart which God laid down from all eternity—gives another and another evidence of the fact that Christ is Truth.

III. Let us draw one or two conclusions. (1) Repose upon Christ. No storms can shake a man when he has a promise, and feels it under him like a rock. (2) Cultivate the truth. Be real; get rid of phraseologies—go deeper than words to facts. Go deeper than facts—get thoughts. Go deeper than thoughts—get principles. Be real—wherever you are, be the same man—a ray of light put into this dark world, to be clear, and make clearness all about it.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1868, p. 237.

CHRIST the Life.

I. We are accustomed to think and speak of life as issuing into death. And the thought is unquestionably true. But there is a yet deeper one, that death issues into life. Consider

how many things that live had their cradle in death. The whole animal creation is full of the beautiful transformations of an inferior creature that dies into another formation of itself, much lovelier than the first. In the moral world means are continually dying for the ends to which these means were subservient and lived. In the spiritual and hidden life, every Christian knows too well what an inward dying to self there must be in daily mortifications and most painful crucifixions, that the Divine life may come forth in its power. And all this is leading us up to that great crowning doctrine of our faith, of which all this is only the allegory, that all life sprang first out of the death of Jesus Christ.

II. The supremacy of Christ over the whole history of life, or rather, I would say, the identity of Christ with the life of every soul, will be the more apparent, if we look at the subject in one or two of its bearings. (1) Let us take the life of nature. "By Him all things consist,"—*i.e.*, are kept together, are held in their places and being. And thus the heavens and the earth, and all that are left in them of order, and promise, and stability, and sweetness, is kept against that day when by Him again, by His promise in the midst of them, they shall be restored to more than their original dignity and loveliness. (2) Turn now to things spiritual. Christ is life not for Himself but for His Church. For whatever God gives to the Son, He gives Him for the Church's sake. The first Adam was a being of real, inherent, energetic life; but he could not communicate it, he was not intended to communicate it to another. But the Second Adam was not only to live, but to diffuse life to live in other lives, to be a fountain of life, to be the life of the whole world. That is what it means; "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1868, p. 245.

UNION with Christ.

I. It is not given to us to know the beginnings of anything, much less of the deep process of union between the soul and Christ, but this much I can say, the great power of the Holy Ghost comes forth in its sovereignty and lays hold of a man's thoughts and the desires and feelings of his mind, and under its influence draws it and makes it come near to Christ. That thought, having come near to Christ, becomes impregnated with a new principle, "life." All other living things shall have their death. The stars will go out, the world will cease, but without

the cessation of a single moment from that date, stronger, happier, brighter, intenser, gladder, it will go on through time into eternity, and through eternity rising everlastingly. And why? It has in it all the immensity and all the eternity of Him who says "I am the Life."

II. Look now alone on two points concerning this life of Christ, so begun in a man's soul. See (1) its completeness; (2) its security; "Your life is hid with Christ in God." What God hides who shall find? (3) its strength. An infant's hand, held by a giant's arm, assumes gigantic force. The very sea-weed, with the ocean at its back, is borne with something of the ocean's might. And what duty is too high, what trial too heavy, what attainment inaccessible for a man who has and realises that he has Christ in him. (4) Its peace. Surely where He dwells no wave of troubled thought can roll heavily. (5) Its expectation. Christ in you the hope of glory. (6) Its finality, its end of ends—God's glory. That makes and will make for ever and ever your soul a paradise to God, when He can behold everything which He has made in you, and behold it is very good, because Christ is the life thereof.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1868, p. 253.

IN these marvellous words our Lord has grappled with the question of all questions, and has answered the enquiry of all times and of all ages. He has told us how we can be accepted with God.

I. "I am the Way." What does that mean? Our Lord takes Thomas' last question and answers it first. He tells him first that He is the Way, before He tells him whither He is going; and therefore seeing that that was the method adopted by Him who knew what was in man, we may be quite sure that this answer of our Blessed Lord is the one that first appeals to the questionings of the human heart. The first question which the soul asks when it becomes anxious about its eternal state is, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?" Our Lord says, "I am the Way," and therefore the first thing we must do is to place the living Christ before us. If it is possible for Christ to be with us now, as His own word promises that He would be, then we cannot understand how He is to be the way unless we first have the eyes of our mind opened to behold Him. If I am to come into the presence of God, there must be some person who can come between me and God, who can lay his hand upon us both and make us one. That person is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He it is who has joined together in Himself heaven and earth, God and man.

II. But even when we have the first question answered, then comes another question, What is truth? "I am the Truth," says our Lord; and if we would know the truth, then we must ask the Holy Spirit to lead us to Christ, who is Himself the Truth. Thus, you see, the words of our Blessed Lord appeal first to the timid, to those who are anxious about their eternal state; and secondly, to the thoughtful, to those who are perplexed by the conflict of opinion.

III. But there is yet another class to whom these words are addressed; and that is the practical, to those who want to know *what is the life*. Christ is Himself the Life. He is not only our mediator with God, He is not only our redemption from sin, but He is also our sanctification. He is not only the life which we must all live, if we would serve Him, but he is Himself the centre of life to us. He is the source of our spiritual life. If we feel that we are dead, if we feel that our heart within us is dull and lifeless, then what is the reason? It is because we do not know Christ as our Life. Thomas did not believe in his Master, therefore he did not understand, and therefore he did not know his Master. If, therefore, we would find in the Lord Jesus in ourselves the fulness of His meaning when He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," we must ask of Him to give us that grace which the doubting Thomas needed, and we must ask Him to help us to believe in Him.

S. LEATHES, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 701.

THE Patient Master and the Slow Scholars.

I. This question of our Lord's seems to me to carry in it a great lesson as to what ignorance of Christ is. Why does our Lord charge Philip here with not knowing Him? Because Philip had said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us. And why was that question a betrayal of Philip's ignorance of Christ? Because it showed that he had not discerned Him as being the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and had not understood that "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;" not knowing that all his knowledge of Christ, howsoever tender and sweet it may have been, howsoever full of love and reverence and blind admiration, is the twilight knowledge, which may be called ignorance. Not to know Christ as the manifest God is practically to be ignorant of Him

altogether. You do not know a man if you only know the subordinate characteristics of His nature, but not the essential ones. The very inmost secret of Christ is this, that He is the Incarnate God, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

II. These words give us a glimpse into the pained and loving heart of our Lord. We very seldom hear Him speak about His own feelings or experience, and when He does it is always in some such incidental way as this. There is complaint and pain in the question, the pain of vainly endeavouring to teach, vainly endeavouring to help, vainly endeavouring to love. But the question reveals also the depth and patience of a clinging love that was not turned away by the pain. Let us remember that the same pained and patient love is in the heart of the throned Christ to-day.

III. Let us look at this question as being a piercing question addressed to each of us. It is the great wonder of human history that after eighteen hundred years the world knows so little of Jesus Christ. In Him are infinite depths to be experienced and to become acquainted with, and if we know Him at all, as we ought to do, our knowledge of Him will be growing day by day. Let us seek to know Christ more, and to know Him most chiefly in this aspect, that He is for us the manifest God and the Saviour of the world.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 2nd series, p. 59.

REFERENCES: xiv. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 245; vol. xvi., No. 942; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 362; Bishop Monkhouse, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 191; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 326; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. i., p. 174; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, pp. 315, 333; G. Moberly, *Plain Sermons at Brightstone*, p. 101; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 54; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 154; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 179; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 331; R. W. Pearson, *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 157; J. T. Stannard, *Ibid.*, vol. x., pp. 340, 373, 383; J. C. Gallaway, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 42; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 206; E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 367; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 8th series, pp. 292, 300, 308, 314. xiv. 7, 8.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 519. xiv. 7, 9.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 209. xiv. 8—F. Wagstaff, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 390; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 301. xiv. 8-9.—H. Melvill, *Voices of the Year*, vol. ii., p. 427; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 239; *Homilist*, vol. v. p. 42; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 128; J. C. Gallaway, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 346; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 8; *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 215. xiv. 8-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 148; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 61. xiv. 8-14.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 401. xiv. 8-16.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., pp. 224, 225.

Chap. xiv., ver. 9.—**"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" etc.**

THE Surprise Christ felt.

I. To Christ, that He was the revealer and the image of the Father was the one foremost truth of His life. Ever since He had sense, He had felt that, and it had grown with His growth and been the one proclamation of His ministry. The blind and the deaf in heart might, He thought, see and hear it, so intense, so vivid, was it to Him. And now one of His hearers asks a question, which suddenly makes Him feel that what is to Him as the sun in heaven is not perceived at all. What wonder that we hear in the question the note of wondering surprise? "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?" At such a time our tendency is to be angry, or to turn aside with scornful silence, or to be filled with the sense of wrong; mark in contrast witht his, the tenderness of Christ, a tenderness which we hear in every word of the reply. There is a faint touch of reproach in it; but it is the reproach of love, and it would not hurt the most sensitive heart. And this was said at a time when irritation might have been indeed excused, when His whole soul was darkened with pain and presentiment, when He felt with exquisite surprise that all He had ever said had been mistaken.

II. The answer itself to Philip's question comes before us now, and is a striking answer, astonishing, indeed, from its sublime boldness, and separated by that from the utterances of every other prophet, none of whom dared to say anything like this: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Who knows Me, knows God; who hears Me, hears God. Nor is this an isolated saying; it is the constantly repeated thought of Christ, repeated in fifty different ways. That was Christ's teaching concerning God and Himself, and therefore concerning God and man. All our life is God's life. We are in His hand and abide in Him, and no one can pluck us out of His hand. We are eternal because He is eternal; and when all mankind shall have arrived at likeness to Christ, it will have arrived at likeness to God. He who shall see the perfected humanity shall say, "He who hath seen humanity, hath seen the Father."

S. A. BROOKE, *The Spirit of the Christian Life*, p. 123.

REFERENCES: xiv. 9.—H. S. Holland, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Nov. 22nd, 1883; A. Maclaren, *A Year's Ministry*, 2nd series, p. 59; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 307; S. Green, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 261. xiv. 10-14.—W. Roberts

Ibid., vol. ix., p. 250. xiv. 10-28.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 309. xiv. 11.—W. M. Taylor, *The Gospel Miracles*, p. 29. xiv. 12.—C. Wilson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 241; J. Aldis, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 376; *Homilist*, vol. iii., p. 493. xiv. 12, 13.—A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, p. 140. xiv. 13.—*Ibid.*, p. 48; E. W. Shalders, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 298. xiv. 13-14.—*Ibid.*, p. 180. xvi. 14.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x. p. 333. xiv. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1932; G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to my Friends*, p. 177; Parker, *Christian Commonwealth*, vol. vi., p. 347; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 199.

Chap. xiv., vers. 15-17.—**"If ye love Me, keep My commandments," etc.**

THE Christian the Temple of God.

I. This is the misery of sin, that it brings what is so unholy, so close, into the Presence of the All-Holy. Sin begins in thought, yet thought is of the soul, and in the soul dwelleth God the Holy Spirit. Thought goes on to consent of the will. No deadly sin is committed, but the soul has first willed it; it has willed it in the very presence of God; not afar off, not under heaven, not under His holy eye alone, but there where He came to hallow us; where by the voice of our conscience, He pleaded with us; where, if we held on in sin, we must first stifle our conscience, that is, deaden His voice, nay, cast Him forth. Yet however marred, defiled, sin-stained, a soul may be, He hath not left that soul, which can yet loathe its own stains, His love hath not yet forsaken the soul which can yet hate what it has been, and long to love Him whom once she would not have to reign over her. Yea, He will yet fan that remaining spark into a flame which shall kindle the whole soul.

II. Great as God's gift is, the soul which can contain it cannot contain the world also. The soul can contain God who is infinite, for He hath said, "I will dwell in them and walk in them." The whole world cannot fill the soul, for it can be filled by nothing but God. Had it all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, it would still crave; for they are ashes and not bread, earth, and not its God. For although all the world could not fill it and it can contain God, it cannot contain the world and God, for God is a jealous God. He, the infinite source of love, must be loved with an entire love. He would give us all He is. He asks of us in return the nothingness we are. Seek therefore to win thy soul more and more from all which is not God. Seek as thou mayest to win to Him the souls of thy brethren whom Christ hath made His own. Commit thyself daily to God, to guard thee as His own shrine.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*, p. 342.

REFERENCES: xiv. 15-17.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 275; W. Roberts, *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 332; D. Bagot, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 73. xiv. 15-21.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 388. xiv. 15-31.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 270. xiv. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1074; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, p. 230; J. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 272; C. Stanford, *The Evening of our Lord's Ministry*, p. 93; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 107; W. Hutchings, *The Person and Work of the Holy Ghost*, p. 78.

Chap. xiv., vers. 16, 17.—**"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever," etc.**

CONSIDER how in His residence with the Church the Holy Spirit has verified this title, "The Spirit of Truth." What reasons have we for concluding that this Comforter who descended at Pentecost, has acted among men as the Spirit of Truth?

I. We cannot say that the Spirit's work has yet been complete in the largest possible extent; but what has been done, however partial in amount, is sufficient as an earnest of the unlimited sovereignty which truth shall yet acquire. It is curious and interesting to observe how truth of every kind has advanced hand in hand with religion. Not, indeed, that it was the office of the Holy Ghost to instruct the world in natural philosophy, to teach the motions of stars or to lay open the mysteries of the elements. He came to unfold Redemption, and so to strengthen the human understanding, that it might be able to bear the vast truths of the mediatorial work. But nevertheless it did come to pass, and there is nothing which should surprise us in the result—that the understanding which the Holy Spirit strengthened to receive redemption, found itself strengthened also to investigate creation. The Christian era has been distinguished by a rapid advance made in every branch of science; by the emancipation of mind from a thousand trammels; by the discovery of truths which seemed to lie beyond the scope of human intelligence. Assign what you will as the cause, the fact has been that the progress of Christianity has identified itself with the progress of natural philosophy.

II. The Holy Ghost was "the Spirit of Truth," to the Apostles. Through His unerring influence it is that we possess most accurate annals of the Redeemer's life—that we can trace His footsteps as He went about doing good, and listen to His voice as He preached the gospel to the poor. If the Spirit were thus the Spirit of Truth in regard of apostles, is He not still such in

regard of every real Christian? It is the office of this Divine person—an office whose discharge must be experienced by every man who will enter heaven—to rectify the disorder of the moral and mental constitution, and thus to communicate that sort of inner light in which alone can be discerned the great truths of religion.

III. There remains much, very much, for this Spirit to teach. How great still is our ignorance. But observe what our Lord says in the text, "that He may abide with you *for ever*." Things which we cannot bear now shall not always be too vast for our comprehension. We may be led on from degree to degree of intelligence, and trained and taught by the Spirit; eternity shall be one continued growth, immortality one accumulating treasure.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2206.

I. As our Lord had created and stimulated and developed the spiritual life of His disciples, so would the Holy Spirit further develop, and finally perfect it. He would move in them. He would encourage and stimulate them. He would create the hungering and thirsting after righteousness which has the promise of being filled, and so absolutely has the Holy Spirit taken the place of Christ as the fountain and wellspring of the life of the soul that the indwelling and inworking of the one are stated by St. Paul to be the same as the indwelling and inworking of the other.

II. Observe that as our Saviour prayed to the Father for them, so now they would pray for themselves by the grace of the Advocate. Much of our Saviour's work among men was teaching them to help themselves. Through the grace of the Holy Ghost they would be enabled to plead for themselves as earnestly and successfully as Christ had done for them; which would be a clear spiritual gain. Prayer heralded every fresh enterprise for the diffusion of the Gospel, and was the great support on which they leaned when they had to endure persecution for the Gospel's sake. Truly they learned under the teaching of the new Advocate who was within them how to make full use of their privilege of access to the Father in the name of His Son.

III. As Christ had led His disciples into truth, so would the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, continue to lead them. The presence of Jesus must have been most stimulating to the disciples because of the constant flashes of light and truth that

emanated from Him. He never spoke platitudes. The commonest truths were adorned with fresh beauty when they fell from His lips. At the prospect of losing such a Guide into the realms of truth the disciples might well feel as if their onward march would be stayed. The loss of Christ would be as the setting of the sun and the coming on of a great darkness over the soul. But they were assured by Christ Himself that even in this respect they should be no losers; in the other Comforter, the other Advocate, would be the Spirit of Truth who should guide them into all truth. They possessed in the words of their Lord the seeds of truth which would burst into bloom when the Holy Ghost began to shed His light upon them, and other and higher truth would be brought to their hearts.

J. P. GLEDSTONE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 355.

Chap. xiv., vers. 16. 17.—**"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth."**

CHRIST'S Absence—Quiet Times.

I. Our state at this moment is exactly that of the rich man's brethren in the parable. We have Moses and the prophets, and should hear them. We have the ordinary means of grace in our hands, with no peculiarly awakening call, so far as we can foresee, to arouse us to make use of them. What a state of heart does it show, that the absence of all especial calls to God should be a relief to it! If we feel it a relief not to be forced to think upon God, it is a relief which we shall continually enjoy more plentifully—a relief which the heart will make for itself, when it cannot readily find it. Let it be that we find these quiet and ordinary seasons a relief to us, and we shall soon become insensible to seasons of excitement; great festivals, solemn occasions, the most touching accidents of life, the celebration of the Christian communion, will all pass over us without making any impression; nothing will break the deep rest of averseness to God which we so dreaded to have disturbed. Our hearts' desire will indeed be gratified; we shall see Christ's face, we shall hear His words, no more, so long as heaven and earth endure.

II. Most dreadful indeed is the faintest show of that feeling which rejoices to escape from Christ's call. But others do not rejoice to escape from it, but dread to think that it will not force them to listen to it. Do we desire some stronger religious excitement than usual? some solemn occasion to oblige us

to think and to pray? some event that may break through the unmoved current of our daily life and not allow it to stagnate? It is a natural desire, but a vain one. Life will have its tranquil hours, its unvaried days, its ordinary and unexcited feeling. How precious are these quiet moments, when we may show our love to God's call by listening for and catching its softest sound! With the world all around us; with death and sorrow and care seemingly at a distance; on the plain road of human life, so far from the edge of the hill that we can enjoy no prospect of the distant country, none of the far-off horizon where earth and heaven meet—have we not God's light to guide and cheer us, and God's air to refresh us, and God's work to do? If the period now before us is indeed to go on quietly, let us be awake ourselves, and then we may be sure that its quiet will have nothing of dulness; that God will be near enough, and the aid of His Spirit abundantly ready, and our progress in grace marked by no obscure or doubtful signs.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 62.

REFERENCES: xiv. 16, 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. iv.; H. Melvill, *Voices of the Year*, vol. i., p. 503; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 315; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ix., p. 167.

Chap. xiv., vers. 16-21.—**"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter," etc.**

I. THE Holy Spirit is promised as another Comforter. This surely indicates, not a new office to be discharged, but an old one, or one already subsisting, to be discharged by a new person. The term "Comforter" is common to the Holy Ghost, and to the incarnate Son. In its highest and holiest import, it is clearly not the exclusive property of the Spirit. The ministry is the same though another minister is to be employed in it. The work is the same, though a new and different workman is to be engaged about it. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter."

II. And for that office of Comforter or Advocate, the Holy Spirit is better fitted, at least for the present, than even the Lord Jesus in person, had He remained on earth, could have been. (1) The other Comforter or Advocate is to be no passing visitor merely, but a permanent resident here on earth, "He may abide with you for ever." His peculiar functions, the department of the work falling to Him, is not of such a sort as to limit the duration of His stay or sojourn here. On the contrary, it requires His unceasing and uninterrupted ministry

always, from the beginning of the Gospel down to the end of time. (2) He is the Spirit of Truth. In that character and capacity, He spiritualises the truth; making it spirit and life. In the hands of any other, even of Christ, the truth, the highest truth, the truth Divine and heavenly, the truth consisting of the very Son Himself, His person and His work, is but flesh which profiteth nothing. The Lord's own personal teaching, had it been prolonged, would have lacked a certain element of living and life-giving energy—a certain vitality and vivifying force, which it can only have when the Spirit makes it His own—impregnates it with His own life, and assimilates it in some sense, to His own nature. (3) The Spirit is an agent or worker, such as the world does not see or know, and therefore cannot receive. Were He other than that, He would not meet your case; He might dwell with you, but He could not be in you. "It is expedient for you that I go away," for this among other reasons, that He whom I am to send can reach the inmost recesses of your inner man and fix My words deeply there. "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

R. S. CANDLISH, *Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers*, p. 192.

REFERENCES: xiv. 16-26.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p, 336. xiv. 17.—W. Sanday, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 221; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 754; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 280; R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 381. xiv. 18.—Wilberforce, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 17; G. Moberly, *Plain Sermons at Brightstone*, p. 219; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 401; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 199. xiv. 18, 19.—J. H. Newman, *Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, p. 137. xiv. 18-20.—G. Moberly, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 145; W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 56; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 13th series, p. 165.

Chap. xiv., ver. 19.—**"Because I live, ye shall live also."**

I. CHRIST lives. In Him was life. He was the Prince, the Author of life. He submitted to die for the sin of the world. But it was impossible that He should be holden of death. He has resumed the body of His humanity, but it is now a glorified body, a body freed from the laws to which He before submitted it, of space and motion; no longer the body of our vileness, but the body of His glory.

II. He liveth; and now what does our text announce to us from His own lips as the consequences of that His life? "Because I live, ye shall live also." Immense consequences shall result from this resumption of His Body, and reunion of it in its resurrection form to His Godhead and His glorified humanity. (1) "In Christ shall all be made alive." In this

lowest, but evident sense, because He lives, we shall live also. Every body of man shall one day be re-animated; known as his body was known, by its distinguishing marks and features; built up again by Him who built it up at first, and reunited to the human soul, which has been waiting in the abode of the departed the fulness of the Father's time. (2) All are united to Christ in the flesh. His body was our body; and the unbeliever, as well as the believer, is one flesh with Christ. All have the same animal and intellectual *soul* which Christ took upon Him; all, unbeliever as well as believer, are sharers in the immortality which He conferred on our nature by His resurrection, as far as this is concerned in it. All have the same immortal spirit; but here comes in the difference. The man who has degraded that Spirit by which he should have reached out after God, who has never sprinkled it with Christ's atoning blood, nor had God's Spirit dwelling in it, he shall live for ever in one sense—but how live for ever? In no spiritual life or enjoyment of God, in no apprehension of Him; for he has rejected the Son of God; and thus for him is reserved a final state of banishment from the presence of God and disappointment of all the high ends of his being. But in the opposite case of the spiritually minded, of those who have learned to look above the world and its animal enjoyment, and its intellectual power and pride, and to seek after the Father of their Spirits by believing on the Son of His love,—they are united to Christ not only in the flesh, not only in the animal and intellectual soul, but in the Spirit also. When Christ, who is their life shall appear, then shall they also appear with Him in glory.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 251.

LIFE in Christ.

I. What we all want, and most of us feel that we want, is to live lovingly. Most persons have a consciousness that they are not living up to the intention of their being, and this sense of the interval which there is between the life we live and the life we might live, is perhaps the chief cause of that general undefined feeling of dissatisfaction and uncomfortableness by which so many of us are continually oppressed. So long as there is an interval between what a man might live, and what he ought to live, and what he does live, there will never be any real rest, and the greater the distance, the greater the restlessness. Seeing that we are constituted as we are, no man can have the true enjoyment of the sense of life until there is some-

thing of eternity in his living. It is an element which God has made to be a part of our spiritualised nature. And there will always be a void until it is in the mind, and we can say of anything we feel, think, or do, "This is for eternity."

II. Now, it is of this life of a man, in his body, soul, and spirit—it is of this life in a man, as forming a part of his immortality, that Christ is speaking, when He makes this comfortable promise concerning His resurrection and ascension, "Because I live, ye shall live also." See how the life of every Christian, *i.e.*, of everyone who really lives, owes itself to the life of Jesus Christ. We live because the death of Christ upon the Cross redeemed us from a state of death; the dying of Jesus being in substitution for our dying, released us from the necessity of dying for ever. And having thus made us capable of living, the death of Christ placed us under those processes by which a certain new inward life is formed and perfected in us.

III. As water is ever seeking the level from which it flows, so the Christian life is always rising towards the standard of that life of Christ in which its own hidden fountain lies. It is a self-evident truth that if we live by Christ and on Christ, we must also live in Christ and to Christ. Our being, true to its great prototype, of which indeed it is only a part, is passing, for a short appointed period, through a risen spiritual life, preparatory to its glorified condition, of which it is always standing upon the eve, when, like Jesus, it will ascend and be taken up to its perfected consummation, and rise to life indeed for ever and ever.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 44.

THE Natural Immortality of the Human Soul.

I. Note some considerations which go to establish the radical unlikeness between spiritual and material beings. (1) The spirit of man knows itself to be capable of continuous improvement and development. (2) The spirit or mind of man is conscious of, and it values, its own existence. (3) Unless a spiritual being is immortal such a being does count for less in the universe than mere inert matter, for matter has a kind of immortality of its own.

II. How does Christ communicate life when He is out of reach of the senses? (1) By His spirit; (2) by the Christian sacraments.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 945.

CONSIDER some aspects in which our Lord's words light up for

us our life. I propose to show how the risen Saviour dispels the darkness in which we walk, fills the vacancy which we dread, gives us the victory over death.

I. The resurrection of Christ is emphatically the accomplishment of our redemption. Apart from that there is no hope for us as sinners in the sight of God. If Jesus Christ had only died, the perfect man would have appeared, but the perfect man would have gone down into the abyss of darkness like the rest. There would have been no proof that the Sacrifice was pleasing to God, no evidence that the Father had accepted Him. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and therein is our salvation sure.

II. But, again, the resurrection of Christ is our victory over death. The life which He has purchased He has given to us, and that life scorns death. He is so One with us that His victory is ours. And so He Himself declares that if we believe in Him we shall never die. Not only death cannot terrify Christ's children, death has no power over them; death is not death, it is a sleep, or rather it is a birth—a birth into a new and glorious life. It is a deliverance, it is a joy. Do not call it death; there is no real death but separation from God; *that* is death, death of body and death of soul, death temporal and death eternal. The believer who is one with Christ can say, "O death, where is thy sting?"

III. But the text is true in another sense. The resurrection is the pledge of the resurrection of our bodies. Because He lives, we also shall live, not only as disembodied spirits, but with new bodies, clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

IV. The resurrection of Christ implies that we are now, even in this world, risen with Him. St. Paul's great object, he tells us, was to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. It was his aim and endeavour, it was his constant prayer, to be conformed to the image of his risen Saviour. It was to this that he exhorted his converts, "Our conversation is in heaven." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

J. J. S. PEROWNE, *Sermons*, p. 274.

REFERENCES: xiv. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 968; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 18; J. Vaughan, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 91; T. T. Munger, *The Freedom Faith*, p. 257.

Chap. xiv., vers. 19, 20.—**"Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."**

WAITING for God in Christ.

I. Wait for Christ, for we are privileged to do so; wait for Him, wait at the outer gate, though the gate may be fast closed, and we can see nothing of the glory within; yet wait, for so Christ bids you. Within that gate is your home, if you will not turn your backs upon it; wait, and it will one day be opened. But we grow tired of waiting. Seven days we wait, and He who alone can sacrifice for us, comes not to us sensibly; nay, He seems to linger beyond His promised time; we pray, and He has not seemed to hear; we are bound, and He has not yet delivered us. And then we are tired of waiting, and we try to offer our own sacrifice; in some way or other—the ways are infinitely various—we try to help ourselves. This is the one great lesson to press upon you, "Wait for Christ." Wait patiently; if your prayers are cold, if your faith is weak, if your sins are many, still wait and watch; pray still, believe amidst unbelief; watch your lives, and struggle with your sins, amidst your constant defeats. This is the state of him who through much tribulation enters into the kingdom of God.

II. And can any tongue adequately describe the joy, when those who so watch behold the dawn? Not the Sun—He is not yet risen—but the gracious dawn. Most touching is the natural dawn, when the forms of things first, and then their colours, begin to appear to us, and there is a stillness over everything, a freshness, yet a calmness inexpressible, the preparation, as it were, for the brightness of the full day. It is a true image of the spiritual dawn to them who have been long waiting. That is the dawn when prayer becomes welcome, when God begins to be realised to our minds, when we think of Him as our loving Father, and so begin to feel towards Him as His children. This is the dawn; not the day, for that may still be distant; the sun arises, when the beasts of the field get them away together, and lay them down in their dens; when evil haunts us no more, and Christ is seen face to face. But the dawn brightening more and more unto the perfect day—that is the Christian's course when he is truly Christ's, when he waits and is not weary.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 321.

REFERENCES: xiv. 19, 20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 208.

xiv. 20.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 289. xiv. 21.—J. W. Colenso, *Village Sermons*, p. 89; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvii., p. 312; Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 159; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 133; G. G. Findlay, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 30. xiv. 21-23.—H. W. Beecher, *Forty-eight Sermons*, vol. i., p. 279. xiv. 21-26.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 91. xiv. 22.—T. Gasquoine, *Ibid.*, p. 83; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 29; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 326; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 175; J. Keble, *Sermons for Saints Days*, p. 406; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vi., p. 181; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 13. xiv. 22, 23.—J. C. Gallaway, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xii., p. 298; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 236.

Chap. xiv., vers. 22-26.—**"Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" etc.**

OBSERVE:—

I. The harmony we may trace between the Spirit's working and the working of our own hearts and minds, according to the ordinary laws of thought and feeling which regulate their movements. Here, as always, it may be seen that grace and nature are not antagonistic but concurrent, not conflicting but conspiring forces. Grace renovates and quickens nature. In the common course of nature, the keeping of the loved one's sayings tends to give a realising sense and sight of the loved one himself, as present in them; not only acknowledging them as having been his own once, but speaking them as his own now. And grace, the gracious ministry of the Holy Ghost, fits into this natural operation, adopts it, uses it, turns it to account, intensifies and vivifies it. Nor is there anything mystical or fanatical in the process. It is a simple quickening of the two faculties that are in exercise, the understanding and the memory.

II. Consider what you lose and forfeit if you have no love to Christ. The faith which works by love is no mere notion of Christ, or barren belief of some facts or doctrines concerning Christ. It is the real personal closing of my soul with Christ, and the accepting of Him as my own Saviour; mine in the sense of my appropriating Him to myself—to myself personally and individually. "Unto you that believe He is precious."

III. When Christ's sayings are lovingly kept, when they are kept altogether; the whole sayings of the book kept as His; how clear and full may His manifestation of Himself to you be expected to be; and to become more and more day by day. Everywhere He comes forth and manifests Himself the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; in creation, providence, judg-

ment, the same; in wrath, in mercy, the same. No more will there be any severing of one part of Holy Writ from another; any setting up of detached passages against one another; any divorce of Christ from Moses or from Paul. Christ is everywhere, Christ alone, Christ always the same.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers*, p. 233.

REFERENCE: xiv. 22-31.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 408.

Chap. xiv., ver. 23.—**"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words."**

CONSIDER:—

I. The connection between Christ and His words. (1) Christ and His words are both very fully made known to us. (2) There is a perfect harmony between Christ and His words.

II. The connection between loving Christ and keeping His words. The way in which our Lord states this brings before us (1) the central truth of Christian doctrine—viz., that in some way, there must be a change of heart before there is a change of life. (2) The Christian philosophy of morality. There is no system but Christianity that gathers all the grand motives to morality round a person, and makes the strength and essence of them spring from love to Him.

J. KER, *Sermons*, p. i.

REFERENCES: xiv. 23.—S. Cox, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 278; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 148; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 451. xiv. 23-31.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 273. xiv. 24-26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1842; F. W. Farrar, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 169. xiv. 25, 26.—F. D. Maurice, *Gospel of St. John*, p. 383. xiv. 25-31.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 138. xiv. 26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 5; vol. vi., No. 315; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 288; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 103; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 370; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 26; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 187; R. W. Church, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 92; B. F. Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 103.

Chap. xiv., ver. 27.—**"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."**

THESE are musical words, but the music is not of earth alone. They touch a strain above the world. In their Divine consciousness of vast spiritual power, in their farness from the strife and trouble of men, they are of that true supernatural which abides in the secret of God.

I. What was it? It was not peace from the outward pains that beset life. The Jewish and the Roman world, the Church and State, were alike against the disciples of Christ. They were driven into deserts, thrown to the beasts, stoned, butchered to make a Roman holiday. It was not then the peace of an easy life Christ left them. On the contrary, He bade them, would they follow Him, expose themselves to the tempest.

II. Was it freedom from the unrest of the heart—freedom from sorrow and care, and bitter pain of thought and love? No, not that either; for it was My peace, said Christ, and He had not peace of heart. On Him the restlessness we know so well abided; He suffered as we suffer; and it is well. For were freedom from these things *His* peace, we should have no certainty of His sympathy. The consoler needs to have been the sufferer, and the conqueror of suffering.

III. What was the peace, then? It was a spiritual peace—peace in the deep region of the human spirit—peace in that inner life, which, striking its thoughts into eternity, is linked unbrokenly to God. Nay, which is a part of God. In that deep Life in Christ there was entire and perfect peace. It was (1) the peace that comes through fulfilment of duty. (2) It was peace that comes from the Triumph of Love. It is in the depth of God's love that His peace is rooted, and in the depth of that life of His which love makes for ever. (3) Christ's peace consisted in conscious union with God. "I and My Father are One." And because Christ had it, and was one of us, we will not despair, however grim and dim the battle in which we fight with phantoms. If one of us (our Brother in humanity) had this peace, if He was at home in the very truth of things, in the very Central Truth, then we also may win it. We, too, may be at one with God. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you."

S. A. BROOKE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 337.

THE Peace of Christ is—

I. The peace of obedience. The submission which we owe to God is stripped from all servileness and obsequiousness by the fact that this submission is not only to a sovereign, but to a righteous and loving sovereign. It is submission of trust in God, and that knows what it trusts. This trust is also a large word when you think of it. It shuts out fear—that it may shut in a perfect love. It means friendly confidence with the unseen, the boldness of a favoured child. It means, therefore, a joyful

peace. When the soul has got this relation with the eternal God—of utter submission to Him as a righteous sovereign, and love to Him as a loving parent—then the heart has obtained the peace of Jesus.

II. This inward peace is what St. Paul calls peace with God. This phrase refers to the pacification of conscience. Faith accepts God's gift of His Son as a sincere gift; it seeks to be reconciled, to be justified, and forgiven in God's way, and thus bowing to the obedience of faith, the sinful man finds that He has recovered that peace with God which is the absence of all condemnation.

III. In this spiritual submission to God, Jesus, in His spiritual character, is our great example. To it His great atonement is our great compeller. To this real loving subjection let us strive continually to bring ourselves, that we may have peace and confidence in Him. There are many sorrows and disturbances to contend with; yet it will not do to give up. It will not do to relegate the hope of inward peace to a future life. Christ had it here. More profound submission to our Father's will, more childlike confidence in the Father and Son; and surely the Spirit, who is the Dove, will descend, and breathe sweet repose wherever His white wings brood? Surely He will make His nest within your spirit; and then, while storms surge and beat around your steps, you shall have the peace of Christ throughout the ages.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xxii., p. 11.

Chap. xiv., ver. 27.—**"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."**

LET us take the word "Peace" in at least some of the senses which our Saviour would give to it, and which are on our part fulfilled.

I. There is peace within ourselves. Everyone knows what it is to be at peace with ourselves, or not at peace. We may be perfectly prosperous, and yet there is a secret pang which makes us ill at ease. There is a something of which we do not like to speak, of which we do not like to hear, and of which, if possible, we would rather not think. "Keep innocency," says the Psalmist, "and do the thing that is right, for that will bring a man peace at the last."

II. Peace with one another. Christ Himself was the great Peacemaker. In Him Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, came together and were one. We must differ. We cannot make all men to be of the same character, of the same pursuits,

of the same tastes, and of the same opinions. But here, as in the natural world, we can and we ought to prevent any difference, except the difference of sin, from becoming a separation. Always open the door wide for repentance. Always make the return as easy and as pleasant as it is possible to be made. There are, no doubt, occasions when truth and justice must be preferred to peace, whether in nations, churches, or private life. There are, no doubt, differences which are widened instead of smoothed by saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." But these are the exceptions, and we must be very careful not to multiply the exceptions lest we should make them the rule of life. The peace of the Holy Spirit of Christ is something much wider and deeper than outward diversities or likenesses. "Not as the world giveth," not as outward appearance giveth, not as the mere letter giveth, but as the Spirit, speaking to our inmost spirits, so is the peace which Christ gives to His disciples.

III. Peace with God. Dwell for a moment on the thought of God—of God in His threefold essence as it were, completed for us. Think of God, the one Eternal Judge, perfectly just and perfectly merciful, who sees not as man sees, who knows whereof we are made, who knows our ignorance and our blindness, who sees us exactly as we are, and not as the unjust, capricious world sees us. That thought is the peace of God the Father. Truly in the Spirit of God is the everlasting peace which broods over the face of the waters, whether of chaos or of cosmos—the peace which lies not on the ruffled outward outward surface, but in the silent depths below.

A. P. STANLEY, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 154 (new series).

REFERENCES: xiv. 27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 300; vol. v., No. 247; C. Stanford, *Evening of our Lord's Ministry*, p. 112; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 93; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 327; W. T. Bull, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 133; R. A. Bertram, *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 234; G. W. Conder, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 196; A. P. Peabody, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 358; J. Oswald Dykes, *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 11; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 394; vol. xviii., p. 127; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 181; W. G. Blaikie, *Glimpses of the Inner Life of our Lord*, p. 178; S. Baring Gould, *Literary Churchman Sermons*, p. 145; J. H. Thorn, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 152; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 259.

I. THESE words imply (1) the possession of a power of control over our own hearts. (2) Responsibility as to the exercise of such control. (3) They do not require that we should harden our hearts against the due influences of grievous circumstances,

or shut our eyes to danger or to threatening sorrow. (4) Fear is here distinctly and separately condemned.

II. The disciple of Christ has sources of joy counteractive of his sorrows, and he has no ground for fear. (1) The Christian disciple is in the keeping of the Saviour personally. The Saviour has charge of us individually. He has charge of the Church; but He takes care of the Church by taking care of us personally, and He takes as much care of us personally as though He had only one of us to look after. (2) Then, the Father in heaven loves the disciple of Christ. Christ tries to comfort His sorrowing ones by reminding them of this very love. He tells them, in the words that follow, "The Father Himself loveth you." (3) Again, a place is prepared in heaven as the eternal home of Christ's disciples, and they are moving to that place continually. (4) Farther, a Comforter is sent to the followers of Christ, to abide with them for ever. (5) Moreover, Jesus Christ gives peace to His disciples—a sure and immoveable foundation of reliance; a trust and confidence which loving intercourse with the Almighty Father is calculated to give. To seek, then, and to cherish this peace, to yield ourselves to the ministrations of the Comforter—to look up unto the heavenly home which the Saviour has in readiness for us—to think of our Father in heaven as really loving us—to realise the fact that we are in Christ's holy keeping—is to prevent fear or to quench fear, and to reduce the stream of sorrow which flows through our souls, and prevent its overflowing its appointed channels and overwhelming our spirit.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 91.

Chap. xiv., ver. 28.—**"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you."**

PRESENT Relations of Christ with His Followers.

The great change of administration to be introduced by the going away and coming again of Christ, includes several points that require to be distinctly noted.

I. That Christ now institutes such a relationship between Himself and His followers that they can know Him when the world cannot. Before this, the world had known Him just as His disciples had, seeing Him with their eyes, hearing His doctrine, observing His miracles; but now He is to be withdrawn, so that only they shall see Him—the world seeth Him not; as being rational persons they may recollect Him, they may read other men's recollections of Him, but His presence

they will not discern. He is not manifest unto them, but only to His followers. He that loveth knoweth God, and he only.

II. It is a point included that the new presence or social relationship is to be effected and maintained by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. And He it is that Christ, in His promise, calls so freely Himself. The New Testament writings are not delicate in maintaining any particular formula or scheme of personality, as regards the distributions of Trinity. And when Christ calls the Comforter whom He promises Himself, He gives precisely the best and truest representation of the Spirit, in His new office, possible to be given. It is to be as if the disincarnated soul or person of Christ were now to go away and return as a universal Spirit invisible, in that form to abide for ever. And the beauty of the conception is, that the Spirit is to be no mere impersonal effluence or influence, but to be with us in the very feeling and charity of Jesus. He will be as forgiving as Christ in His passion, as tenderly burdened as Christ in His agony, as really present to physical suffering, as truly a Comforter to all the shapes of human sorrow. All which Christ outwardly expressed, He will inwardly show.

III. In this coming again of Christ by the Spirit, there is included also the fact that He will be known by the disciple, not only socially, but as the Christ, in such a way as to put us in a personal relationship with Him, even as His own disciples were in their outward society with Him. Christ is so related now to the soul of them that receive Him, that He is present with them in all places, at all times, bearing witness with their spirit, in guidance and holy society a friend, a consoler, a glorious illuminator, all that He would or could be, if we had Him each to himself, in outward company. Our answer then, to the question, What are Christ's present relations to His followers? is, that He is present to them as He is not and cannot be to the world; present as an all-permeating Spirit—present as the all-quickening life—consciously, socially present—so that no explorations of science or debates of reason are wanted to find Him, no going over the sea to bring Him back, or up into Heaven to bring Him down, because He is already present, always present, in the mouth and in the heart. In this manner He will be revealed in all men, waits to be revealed in all, if only they will suffer it. The word for every trusting, loving heart is, I will come unto it; I will be manifest unto it; lo, I will be with it always.

H. BUSHNELL, *Christ and His Salvation*, p. 295.

REFERENCES: xiv. 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1871; *Ibid., My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 154; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 226; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 214. xiv. 30.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 330.

Chap. xiv., vers. 30, 31.—**"Henceforth I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me," etc.**

CONSIDER:

I. Christ as meeting the prince of this world. (1) The prince of this world comes as an accuser. When the willing Surety took our place, and submitted to the treatment which we deserved, the prince of this world could lay nothing to His charge. He could find no fault in Him, either personally or as our substitute, in His character or in His finished work. (2) The prince of this world comes, not only as an accuser, but as a ruler and lord, claiming dominion over all the world. Still, the Lord says, the prince of this world has nothing in Me. He may be this world's prince, but he is not Mine. I owe him no allegiance; nor can he, by any minister of his, have any power against Me, except it be given him from above. I give no heed to his suggestions or to his threats. It is not his will that I do, but the will of Him who sent Me; and if that will appoint a Cross, better far a Cross from the Father than a hundred crowns from the prince of this world.

II. The Christian as meeting the prince of this world. (1) He comes to accuse. In this matter let the Father alone deal with you, as having something in you. Fall into His hands. Let Christ's willing endurance of the Father's righteous sentence of death for sin become yours. Be ye crucified with Christ. Be ye partakers in His passion, in His cross. Let the Father search and judge and condemn you. That sets you free from every other accuser. (2) The prince of this world comes to claim you as subject to himself. But his title is now null and void, for prince of the world though he be, he has no natural, no original, no legitimate right to be your prince. His right can be only a right of conquest on his part, or of consent on your part, or both. But on neither of these grounds has he anything in you now.

R. S. CANDLISH, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 67.

Chap. xiv., ver. 31.—**"Let us go hence."**

LET us go hence. What was He leaving? Whither was He going? He was going to Gethsemane, to the kiss of the traitor; to the tribunals of Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate; to His shameful

and bitter Cross; to the unknown agonies of His last great conflict with the prince of this world. He had a baptism to be baptized with, and He was straitened until it was accomplished.

I. He was impelled by His supreme sense of duty. No self-interest, no sentiment was ever permitted to interfere with this sense of duty. In all truly great lives the sense of duty is dominant. A man who will not, for duty's sake, do an arduous or unpleasant thing, will neither build up his own moral strength and nobility nor glorify God before men. Had he taken counsel of His own inclinations, He would not have gone from the upper room to Gethsemane, He would not have made men feel the grandeur and sacredness of His Father's service.

II. Another impulse was to produce the impression of His filial affection. Love is the inspiration of all high duty, for duty is more than the mere sense of right, it is the impulse of sympathy; a thing done with an averted face and a reluctant heart is not duty. Duty, therefore, is more than mere measured service, it is the feeling that prompts us to do all that we can do to accomplish God's purposes, to satisfy His heart. Our Lord attached great importance to the impression which His love of duty made upon men. He would have the world to see and know His love, because it would inspire love in them. The only talisman of faith is dutiful love. They who worthily love are held and ruled by love; they whose love is weaker than circumstance do not love at all. Be it ours by ever higher duty, by ever growing love, by ever greater work, to make the world know that we love the Master whom we serve. The one supreme question of every servant of Christ is not, What will most conduce to my ease? What will most please my preference? but, What will most glorify Him?

H. ALLON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 72.

REFERENCES: xiv. 31.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 157; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 24; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 225. xv. 1.—F. D. Maurice, *Gospel of St. John*, p. 396; C. Stanford, *Evening of our Lord's Ministry*, p. 133. xv. 1, 2.—Philpot, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 409. xv. 1-4.—A. Mackennal, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 235; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 41; vol. xvi., p. 184. xv. 1-5.—H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 121; D. Fraser, *Metaphors of the Gospels*, p. 347; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 311; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 486. xv. 1-6.—R. C. Trench, *Studies in the Gospels*, p. 283. xv. 1-8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80; W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 196. xv. 1-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 220. xv. 1-17.—A. B. Bruce *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 415.

Chap. xv., ver. 2.—**"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."**

GOOD Works.

I. All that Christ did on the earth and said and suffered, and all that He now is in heaven, and all that He says in heaven, and all for which He has appointed and instituted His Church, is to establish and manifest truth. Truth is communicated to us that it may beget faith, and faith is given to us that we may find peace; and we have peace that we may enjoy the sweetness of communion with God; and we have sweetness of communion with God that we may take root and grow in the fruit of holiness. The very next thing to the glory of God, and only second to it, is holiness, because holiness is God's image.

II. What is *fruit*? Let us analyse it. We were all once poor, helpless, lifeless, dead branches. We could not raise ourselves up. God took us off the vine and joined us to Jesus Christ. The fruit depends upon the depth of the graft. If you are a graft indeed, then a spirit, a sure influence, and an empowering, vigorating, propagating principle has flown, and is always flowing, from the Father through the Son into your heart, just as the sap from the root through the stem into the little branches. If that secret process is going on, fruit is always being formed upon you. The sap must run when the spring-time comes; grace must flow in its season, and when the sap runs, it must deposit itself and the deposit must become fruit, and so grace must turn itself into good works.

III. God will have, and God must have, faithfulness in life, personal holiness, and that holiness going forth to extend itself in the world. No, God will look on nothing where He does not see, what He saw in Eden, His own reflection. Hence, in all this present life, you have not yet the clue to read life's mysteries if you are not looking upon life as the probation and the discipline and the school for another state. It is God deepening the features of the resemblance of His children to Himself. And when in another world we shall look back on all the sufferings of this lower state, and learn to connect the great preparative process that has been carried on here, with that higher being where the real fruits of glory shall be always shedding themselves over the fields of immensity; we shall understand better than we can read it here what our Lord means in the words of this text.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 211.

I. THE main and direct application of such is of course to individual Christians, to whom indeed it was spoken. The branch bears fruit by virtue of the healthy and generous sap which flows into it from the vine. Without union with the vine it were not a living branch at all; without this fertilising sap flowing, and flowing rightly, in proper measure through it, it could bring forth no fruit. But, as in the operations of husbandry, the sap requires directing, the branch must be trained and pruned, and stopped from rambling out into unfruitful exuberance. So it is with God's spiritual husbandry likewise. The fruit-bearing branches of Christ are liable to become exuberant and unprofitable—to cover a vast space without a correspondent yield for the Master's use. All afflictions of believers are but the knife of the great Husbandman, the purging that they may bring forth more fruit.

II. The same parable which describes individuals, describes nations. If Christian believers are the smaller twigs of the great vine, each in Christ and Christ in them, the greater limbs of the vine may figure forth to us Christian nations, including families, as they include individuals, but existing and bearing fruit by the same power and under the same conditions. And the heavenly Husbandman purifies us that we may bring forth more fruit. Let us then be watchful; not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is; not surprised nor cast down because we receive evil at His hand as well as good, but examining our fruit, and enquiring what the heavenly Husbandman expects of us, and sparing neither ourselves nor our substance—but diligent in seeking His grace, that we may show ourselves mindful of His great mercies, and fulfil the end of His chastisement.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 247.

REFERENCES: xv. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 774; J. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 293; Archbishop Maclagan, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 41.

Chap. xv., ver. 4.—**"Abide in Me, and I in you."**

I. IF there is any lesson which experience forces on the heart, which lays a deeper hold on the soul, as the soul gets a better knowledge of itself, which sinks into us in proportion to our endeavour to rise above ourselves, it is that the source of all spiritual life and health is in the thought of God, and that without that thought we cannot really live. We look back at last and feel that our progress is really nothing, that we have

to do all over again, that we have not yet even begun, that what we fancied was generosity was but high spirits and good humour, that what we thought was unselfishness was but the surrender of what we did not greatly value, that what we thought was our sweetness and kindness was but a love of popularity, that we have only been successful when we have never really been tried. And we come back at last to the love of God as the one thing that can keep the soul alive, the one thing that saves us from falling back into utter hardness, the one power that still renews us when our own strength fails, that love of God which we read in the Cross of Christ.

II. If God's patience be infinite, so is His forgiveness absolute. There is no question of great or of little sins when we clasp the Cross. It is this fulness of patience, this fulness of forgiveness, which brings the Christian back to the Cross of Christ at last, as the one spring and source of all Christian life. All else is proved to be, however useful, yet still insufficient; all else, whatever good it may do, yet seems somehow to fall short of that one thing that the soul cannot spare, the smile on the face of God. Somehow, when we fail elsewhere, we seem to know that it was natural that we should fail. We are not much surprised, however much we may be pained, by finding that our own strength of will has proved too weak, or by finding that long maintained habits have given way to the presence of new temptation, or by seeing that clearer knowledge by no means implies greater purity or more spiritual life. But when we come to the Cross of Christ, to the love which stands unparalleled by anything else that we know, we feel that it cannot fail, for the fountain is supplied by the inexhaustible waters of heaven itself.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 146.

UNION with God.

The root of all true spiritual life must be in God Himself. Isolated, independent life in each individual man is conceivable in thought, but revelation and experience concur in teaching us that it is never found, and in fact cannot exist. There is but one real source of good. And if there be any good in us, it must have come and must continue to come from that source. In being united to God through Christ consists, according to the revelation of the New Testament, the true life of man.

I. If we leave out of our lives all that is wrong in them, and think only of what is unreproved by our conscience, we see

in the first place that a large proportion of all that we do is in a sense mechanical, and has no conscious principle or purpose. If this part of a man's life is on the whole good, and such as becomes a true man and a servant of God, it would be absurd to say that this was not a great blessing to himself and to those with whom he lives. But, on the other hand, this taken by itself does not imply true spiritual life. It may probably be the result of careful discipline and of nothing more.

II. If we rise a step higher, we find a good deal of what our consciences would not only not censure, but positively approve, due to good impulses and instincts. Though good gifts in themselves these do not constitute the Christian character. This is proved by the fact that very often these gifts are found in men who are not living or trying to live good lives. We cannot call these impulses, however useful, however attractive, however beautiful—spiritual life.

III. We rise one step higher, and we come to what must be called the life, not of impulse, but of principle. I do not think there can be any doubt that the conscientious life, even if it be nothing more, is, as far as it is conscientious, true spiritual life. But yet it is not the highest. I do not say that men are never branches of the True Vine without being themselves aware of it. But far, far more blessed are those who not only derive from God the true strength of their life, but who know from whom that strength comes. How much fuller is his blessing, how much greater his strength, who not only is upheld by God's Almighty hand, but knows the hand which upholds him and knows that it can never fail.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 244.

REFERENCES: xv. 4.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 318; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 69; A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 190. xv. 4, 5.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 65; E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 19; G. Salmon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 133.

Chap. xv., ver. 5.—**"I am the Vine, ye are the branches," etc.**

JESUS, the Source of Spiritual Blessing to men.

I. When men speak, as they do now, so much of Jesus Christ as only one amongst the many great teachers and benefactors of our race, does it not occur to them as strange and unaccountable that He alone—He alone of all those whose names have come down to us with this honour attached to them—should, in the midst of this advanced and enlightened age, possess a living power and a devoted and loving following. The writings of

many of the great thinkers of antiquity are still in our hands. We value them for what we think they are worth. But, I ask, over whom do they rule? By whom are their authors reverenced and worshipped? We may delight our intellects with the hard, keen reasoning of an Aristotle, or delight our souls with the sublime conceptions and dulcet words of a Plato; but what man in his senses would now profess himself an Aristotelian or a Platonist? Their power has long since passed away; their sceptre is broken; and to most men, even in civilised countries, they are nothing but a name. But Jesus Christ is still in the midst of us as a living power. Men believe in Him, receive His teachings, confide their highest interests into His hands, love Him with an all-mastering love, and if need be, are ready to sacrifice even life itself for His sake. And if we have yet to expect a further development of thought which is to supersede Christianity, why has it been so long in coming? Centuries have passed, and yet no sign of its approach is to be seen. Is not the world's last hope in Christ? Is not our last alternative this: Jesus Christ for all, or a dark, dreary, and hopeless nothing.

II. The moral judgments and the spiritual wants of men are the same now as they were when Christianity was first preached, as they have ever been during the whole period that Christian truth has been the object of thought. Why should men wish to change what has already been found to meet the end it was designed to reach in satisfying the intellectual, the moral, and the spiritual wants of men? Let search be made by men into their spiritual necessities, let them survey and catalogue their spiritual wants, let them gather into one sum all their needs and all their longings as moral, accountable, and immortal beings, and then let them come unto Jesus Christ and see whether He is not ready and sufficient to do for them all they need. He alone who came forth from the bosom of the Father can reveal God to men.

W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 699, new series.

REFERENCES: xv. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 345; vol. xxvii., No. 1625; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 348; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 201; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 145; *Ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. x., p. 277; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 267; vol. xv., p. 101; R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 213; H. W. Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit*, 5th series, p. 293; W. Page Roberts, *Liberalism in Religion*, p. 137. xv. 5-8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., pp. 85, 224. xv. 7.—A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, pp. 156, 164; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 474. xv. 7-11.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 237.

Chap. xv., ver. 8.—**"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples."**

NOTE:—

I. The relation between doctrine and practice. Our text sets this before us shortly, but most admirably. We have in it Christian precept springing out of Christian doctrine. "Herein is My Father glorified, if ye are influenced and dwelt in henceforth by the Holy Spirit, the life-giving sap of that vine; if ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples"—the disciples of the Son of God, who came to suffer for us, that we might live before God, and to teach us, that we might obey God. Christian practice then springs out of Christian doctrine, but by no means as a matter of course. Those who preach only doctrine are not justified in taking for granted that correct Christian practice will spring out of doctrinal teaching, however correct. As, on the one hand, we have no right to infer that a man who lives correctly and purely will be right in doctrine, so, on the other hand, we have no right to infer that he who believes strictly and exactly the true doctrines of the faith will be right in practice.

II. Note some of the principal points connected with Christian practice. (1) The first is *reality*. We are not called upon to make a show in the Church, or to make a show in the world; but we are called upon to be godly men, walking in the sight of God, and the sunshine of an enlightened conscience; and this we cannot be unless our religion is real. (2) Note the paramount importance of Christian love. That there is in the present day a great want of this grace, I surely need not remind you. The Christian Church is broken up into parties, and those parties distinguished from one another in many cases by so very thin a line of either belief or practice, that it would be exceedingly difficult for even their leaders on meeting together to define to one another what it is that keeps them apart. It is impossible to differ from a man conscientiously, in a Christian point of view, otherwise than in a spirit of love, unless you have banished from your minds all those asperities and prejudices which will constantly come in to interfere with conscientious holding of opinion when that love does not exist. (3) Hold fast reality and simplicity in Christ. Freedom in action to God consists in having the loins girt about with truth. Be not afraid of being that which you seem, and seem to be that which you are conscious of being.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 325.

THE great teaching of these words is this: Man's greatest power for glorifying God is a life of Christ-like action.

I. The inward life in union with Christ must show itself outwardly in Christ-like action. (1) All profound emotions must display themselves in action. (2) The inner Christian life has a power to overcome the hindrances to its manifestation.

II. That life of Christ-like action is man's greatest power of glorifying God. We may trace this in two ways: (1) A Christ-like life is the strongest manifestation of God to the world. (2) A Christ-like life is the greatest human influence to bring men near God.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 58.

REFERENCES: xv. 8.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 355. xv. 9.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 78; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 259. xv. 9, 10.—J. Lockhart, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 88. xv. 10-16.—R. Thomas, *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 357.

Chap. xv., ver. 11.—**"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."**

I. IT is written "Rejoice in the Lord." And what is joy in the Lord? Is it merely the joy of the child, a flash of meteoric light, without permanence, without a fixed source within, or an abiding effect without? No, indeed. Joy in the Lord has for its ground, knowledge of the Lord. In order to rejoice in the Lord, you must know the Lord not as you know a mere fact, but as you know a dear friend, a loving father, One who is the source of your life, the fountain of your good, the hope of your soul, the desire of your heart. Men are always tempted to rejoice, not in Him, but in themselves and the world; in their strength, their comforts, their advantages. But He shakes our security in these things, that we may live nearer to Him; that we may learn when and where only is the joy that remains; not written in the sand and washed out by every tide, but graven on the everlasting rock; and that by personal experience we may each one rejoice in Him alone—in Him whatever betide—in Him for ever and ever.

II. And these things He does with us, that our joy may be full. If He had left us to ourselves, we should be filling the cup with strange ingredients, which we mistake for joy. We should rise in our national exclusiveness, our earthly pride, our carnal security, and thus when the cup of joy seemed to be full, and we lifted it to our lips to drink, it would be part joy and part bitterness; but now He casts out the bitterness, and though

in His own way and not in ours, He is filling the cup with true unmixed joy—joy which will abide with us and refresh us and stand every trial—joy which will be joy on the bed of sickness and in the prospect of death—yea, and when death is past, in His heavenly kingdom.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 280.

THE fellowship of Christ's joy the source of true blessedness.

I. What was the blessedness of Christ? As the first step in this inquiry we must ascertain how far His blessedness is to be understood by man. We begin, therefore, by laying down the truth: (1) That the blessedness of the Infinite God is essentially incomprehensible. We can only conceive blessedness as increasing; therefore we must think of Him as more blessed as the ages roll on, and because those two thoughts can never be reconciled, the blessedness of God is for ever incomprehensible. But in God revealed in Christ the mystery is yet deeper. Whether Jesus, during the years of His humanity, did enter into the unchanging bliss of the Father we cannot tell. (2) Regarding Christ purely from the human side of His being, we observe that His blessedness as the God-man must be in some measure comprehensible. We see how His joy rose through all His sorrow. He tells us it came by keeping His Father's commandments and abiding in His love. We have the two elements combined to form it—the giving up of Himself to work the will of God, and the consciousness that the Infinite Love was resting on Him through it all. (3) But can that joy be communicated? To enter into Christ's joy we must become Christ-like. Ours must be that utter surrender of self in doing and bearing God's will, and then will the sense of infinite love dawn upon us, and we shall know something of the lofty gladness which filled the Saviour's heart while he was moving to the garden and the Cross.

II. The fellowship of Christ's blessedness is the only source of perfect joy. Perfect joy has two conditions which all men practically recognise. In its source it must be self-surrender to the highest love, and in its action it must be independent of outward changes. The longing to attain a state of life superior to the accidents of time and change shows this. The wisest men have spoken of following the right in the face of all consequences, as the source of the highest and purest joy of man. The fellowship of Christ's joy gives this. It is a joy undisturbed by sorrows; it may seem to be weakened, but it is in reality

strengthened by suffering. And even death itself, which damps out the joy of all other men, consummates the blessedness of those who, through fellowship of life, are partakers of the joy of Christ.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 46.

REFERENCES: xv. 11.—H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 280; *Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 321; R. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 357; A. Mackennal, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 235; J. T. Stannard, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 168; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 131; vol. xi., p. 270; W. G. Blaikie, *Glimpses of the Inner Life of our Lord*, p. 202. xv. 12.—*Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 687. xv. 12, 13.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 502. xv. 12-16.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 278. xv. 12-17.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 269.

Chap. xv., ver. 13.—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

THE Death of Christ, our only Stay. If the thoughts of sin, death, and judgment be so terrible, as in truth they are to every soul of man, on what shall we stay ourselves when our time is at hand?

I. First, upon the love of God, in giving His Son to die for us. This is our first foundation, that God loves the world; that He looks upon the works of His hands with an eternal and stedfast love, with a tender, yearning compassion. Whatever is doubtful, this is sure. Light does not pour forth from the sun with a fuller and directer ray, than does perfect and eternal love overflow from the bosom of God upon all the works that He has made. God's creative love alone would be enough to still our fears, and to show us that, if any perish, it is not because He is austere, but because they are evil. The whole will and Kingdom of God is love; and to Him, in that Kingdom, we may come with boldness of hope and trust.

II. We have, as a second foundation on which to build our trust, the love of the Son in giving Himself for us. Being in the form of God, He emptied Himself of His glory. His Godhead He could not lay aside for us; but He took to Himself something—the dearest and most precious to the soul of man—He took our nature, and therein a life, the most loved and priceless of *all* the gifts of God. There is nothing to be compared with life. We cherish it as our very self; it is the centre of every care; the end of all our labours. Such He took unto Himself, and thereby He possessed Himself of something He might give for us.

III. In Christ's death were united the oblation of a Divine person, and the sanctity of a sinless man; the perfection of a holy will, and the fulfilment of a spotless life; the willing sacrifice of the sinless for the sinful, of the shepherd for the sheep that was lost, of life for the dead. How this wrought atonement for the sin of the world, we cannot say further than is revealed. How the guiltless could take the place of the guilty—how the penalty, due to our sin, could be laid on any but ourselves, above all, on One who was sinless—must, at least in this our wayfaring on earth, be a mystery unsearchable, and a depth past finding out. In this life it is enough for us to know that He hath "tasted death for every man"; that "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 331.

REFERENCES: xv. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1128; H. R. Haweis, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 81.

Chap. xv., vers. 13, 14.

FRIENDSHIP with Christ. Observe—

I. That the overtures of this friendship came first from Christ Himself, had their spring in considerations which could have originated with the Divine mind alone, whilst the proof of His own earnest desire to bring about such friendship is the very strongest that could be given. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Who are Christ's friends? And the answer returned by our text is significant—"Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Friends, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, do not give commands at all. The relation commonly supposes something of equality, with no allowed subjection on either side, but maintained chiefly by offices of reciprocated kindness. But Christ had towards His disciples a prior relationship of Lord and Master, and therefore He is anxious to show that in receiving them into His friendship He does not thereby cancel their previous obligation to obedience and service. The friendship, then, which Christ has towards His disciples is manifestly only that of a sovereign towards certain subjects whom He admits to approach Him on some footing of condescending intimacy and confidence.

II. Assuming that we understand the nature of friendship with Christ, and in heart and purpose desire to comply with the required terms of it, let us see, in the next place, how this

friendship is reciprocated by Christ, by considering some of the ways in which He shows Himself friendly to us. (1) He will be a counsellor to us in difficulties. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor." (2) He is a friend that giveth gifts; enhancing the value of His advice by supplying the means to follow it. Two things always go together in the Gospel—Repentance and Faith. These are Christ's gifts to His chosen ones. (3) The Lord shows Himself friendly in the methods and extent of His forgiveness. His forgiveness is as full as it is free, and as free as it is full. (4) It is a part of true friendship to be with us in the hour when health and strength are failing, when body and soul are parting, when the dust is returning to the earth as it was, and the spirit is returning to God who gave it. The proofs of the power of the friendship of our Divine Master increase with the exigency of the occasion, are most comforting when all other friendships fail.

D. MOORE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3141.

REFERENCES: xv. 14.—W. Anderson, *Discourses*, p. 214; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1552; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 132; E. Johnson, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 357. xv. 14, 15.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 299; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 251. xv. 15.—E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 141; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 111; vol. xv., p. 26; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., pp. 123, 376; J. Ker, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 220; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, p. 339; vol. xxx., p. 372; Bishop Thorold, *The Yoke of Christ*, p. 103; E. Paxton Hood, *Dark Sayings on a Harp*, p. 295; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 306. xv. 16.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 61; A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, p. 172; W. P. Lockhart, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 136.

Chap. xv., ver. 17 (with 1st Peter ii., ver. 17; Heb. xiii., ver. 1).—**"These things I command you, that ye love one another."**

I. LOOK at the words in which the message is delivered: "That ye love one another," that ye "love the brotherhood," that this "brotherly love continue." It is clear that in the first instance it is Christians, as such, who are spoken to and spoken of. The brotherhood is the body of Christians, then a little company, now a great multitude that no man can number. They stand out from the rest of the world. The hatred of the outside world is taken for granted, and as it were, discounted. This "world," so far as these chapters are concerned, is neither to be loved nor hated. It is to be reasoned with, to be convinced of sin, in the end to be overcome. And the great spell that is to overcome it, is the φιλαδελφία, the love which binds each

brother who owns the common bond of the Christian communion. I will not stay to inquire how far this "world" of scripture, this mass of hostile or indifferent outsiders, has a real and formidable existence for us in this nineteenth century of a Christianity which is pledged and destined to overcome it. As regards my present subject, I may forego this inquiry, and assume that the brotherhood is a society far more extended. "Love the brotherhood" cannot now mean less than this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." No man who has caught anything of the spirit of Christ's teaching as a whole, and still more the spirit of Christ's example, can doubt that to an enlightened Christian the whole world is ideally the brotherhood. Let a large part of your religion always look to the "brotherhood" in its aim. Let Christian private devotion be always fused with Christian public spirit.

II. There is a danger that our religion may be centred either on our own souls, or on the doctrines and watchwords dear to our religious friends, or on some too limited portion of the brotherhood; in fact, that the very conception of brotherhood may be so narrowed as to be degraded and almost unchristianised. We should recognise alike from the Gospel, from history, "from the signs of this most portentous time" that God meant all to be unselfish—nations, churches, classes, sexes—to work and to live and to die, not for themselves, but for each other, the strong for the weak, the rich for the poor, the educated for the ignorant.

H. M. BUTLER, *Oxford and Cambridge Review*, Nov. 1st, 1883.

REFERENCES: xv. 17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. xv. 17-27. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Chap. xv., vers. 18, 19.—**"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you," etc.**

THE World we have Renounced.

Perhaps there is no word more commonly in our mouths than "the world," and yet hardly any to which we attach less clear and certain meaning—indeed, the sense intended by it varies according to the character of the person that uses it. Let us therefore endeavour to come at something better than mere floating notions about it. The world out of which the disciples were taken was not the Gentile world, but the disobedience of the visible Church.

I. First, it is true to distinguish between the Church and the world, as between things antagonistic and irreconcilable; for

the Son of God, by His incarnation and atonement, and by the calling and mission of His Apostles, has founded and built up in the earth a visible kingdom, which has no other head but Him alone. That visible kingdom is so taken out of the world that a man must either be in it or out of it, and must, therefore, either be in the Church or in the world. In the visible kingdom of Christ are all the graces and promises of life; in the world are the powers and traditions of death. We know of no revealed salvation out of that visible kingdom; we can point to no other way to life. There is but one Saviour, one Mediator, one Sacrifice for the sin of the world, one baptism for the remission of sins, one rule of faith, one law of holiness. There can be no real fellowship or intercourse between those that are of the body of Christ, and those that are not. The only intercourse the Church has ever held with the heathen has been either such as St. Paul permitted to the Christians in Corinth, who might still maintain the relations of outward kindliness with unbelievers, or direct missions for the conversion of unbelievers. There could be no closer fellowship; for there was a moral and formal contrariety between the rules of conduct and aim on both sides, which held the Church and the world apart.

II. But farther, it is no less true to say, that the world, which in the beginning was visibly without the Church, is now invisibly within it. So long as the world was heathen, it warred against the Church, in bitter and relentless persecutions. It was when the conversion of individuals drew after it, at last, the whole civil state—when the secular powers, with all their courts, pomps, institutions, laws, judicatures, and the entire political order of the world, came into the precinct of the Church—then it was that the great tradition of human thought, passion, belief, prejudice, and custom, mingled itself with the unwritten usages of the Church. The world is now inside the fold, baptized, catechised, subdued, specious, and worshipping. This is a far more dangerous antagonist. There is but one safeguard for Christ's servants; to be like Him, in whom the prince of this world in the hour of temptation had nothing he could make his own. Our safety is not so much *where* as *what* we are.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 239.

REFERENCES: xv. 18-27.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 429; W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 318. xv. 18-xvi. 15—W. Milligan, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 370.

Chap. xv., ver. 19.—"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

I. NOTE the peculiar characteristic of God's people; they are not of the world, but are chosen out of the world. Our Lord resolves the distinction into the positive purpose of God. Our text says not only "Ye are not of the world," but explains why: "because ye are chosen out of the world." If they are not of the world, the essential and fundamental reason is because they were chosen in God's purpose, and given to Christ in that purpose, and subsequently given to Him in fact.

II. The result: "Therefore the world hateth you." That is true as a fact—the whole history of the world proves it. The text does not say that it is because God's people testify of the acts of the world that they are wicked, that therefore the world hates them. It says, whereas the people of God are not of the world, but chosen out of the world, on that account it is that the world hates them. A man of an unworldly spirit, such as the Lord's people are supposed to be, it is that that condemns the world. A heavenly-minded, spiritual, holy man, granting that character to exist, and to come in its practical bearing in reference to the world, the world would hate it. Is it no obvious? What is the world's idol? The world! The world will love its own; the worldly man idolises the world; it is his life, it is all that he cares about. Touch the world, practically condemn the world, and the whole of that man's life, and his pleasures, and recreations, and joys, and delights are all wrapped up in that word "world." The worldly man dislikes the man of God. He feels that his whole life and character strikes a blow at that which he himself delights in, and he is conscious, moreover, of the superiority of that man, and has a deep conviction that he is right. The lesson is that we should show by practice that a man of God is not a man of the world. Seek the things of God, but not the things of time and sense. Be true to your vocation, your hopes, expectations, and prospects; for so will you glorify God, and you will have increasing meetness for heaven's glory.

C. MOLYNEUX, *Penny Pulpit*, Nos. 421-22.

REFERENCES: xv. 19.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 302. xv. 22.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vi., p. 270.

Chap. xv., ver. 20 (with Matt. x., ver. 24; Luke vi., ver. 40; John xiii., ver. 19).—"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord," etc.

I. "THE disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord," etc. This saying is used for the purpose of preparing Christ's followers for the world's enmity. In this application it has a double aspect. You may not, or you may, be persecuted. If you are not, there is room for inquiry. If you are, there is ground of comfort and strength.

II. The maxim or proverb of the text is applied, further, to the mission or function of the Lord's followers as witnesses and prophets to the world. You are now addressed, not as the Lord's disciples and servants, but as yourselves invested with the character, and called to discharge the office, of masters and teachers. The Lord is here speaking of the duty which, as being yourselves enlightened, you owe to your fellow-men; and of the necessity of your being duly qualified and fully prepared for the performance of that duty. And the particular qualification, the special preparation, on which He insists is this, that you make sure of your own possession of the attainment or endowment, whatever it be, which you wish to be instrumental in conveying or imparting to your brother.

III. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John xiii. 16). This third use or application of the maxim should be very precious to us. It binds us more closely than the other two in living and loving union of the tenderest sort with Christ. It is as one with Jesus that I must wash the feet of my brother. It must be because I am of one mind with Jesus in caring, not merely generally, for my brother's deliverance from eternal death, and his ultimate attainment of eternal life, but in the least and lowest of the incidents that may affect his comfortable ability to realise on the one hand, his present standing, or to press on to his future hope. We must apprehend and feel the washing of the feet to be inseparably connected with the atoning death symbolised, and the self-sacrificing life foreshadowed; and as implying, in that connection, the tenderest concern about a brother's most susceptible point, his weakest part.

R. S. CANDLISH, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 82.

REFERENCES: xv. 22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 194; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 215; J. Keble, *Sermons for Sundays after Trinity*, part ii., p. 385. xv. 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 89.

Chap. xv., vers. 26, 27.—"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me," etc.

THE Promise of the Spirit witnessing of Christ in the world.

I. There is to be a testifying of the Spirit in the world, corresponding to our testifying to the world. His testifying is an internal subjective influence or operation in the world, to which your testifying is an external objective address. For what is the Spirit's testifying work? What is His mode of witness-bearing? Of what sort is it? It is a work of reproof, or of conviction. "He shall reprove, or convince." What an awful issue is thus made to turn of your witness-bearing! When you speak to men about Christ, your own speech affects their present state and future prospects. They cannot go away from you, or send you away from them, without something left behind by you with them that must tell on them for weal or woe. That is a serious thought. But that is not all. In speaking to them, you ask in prayer for them that, in terms of this promise of the Lord, the Holy Spirit may apply and endorse what you say, by a work of His own in those to whom you speak.

II. Along with the powerful working of the Spirit in the world to which we testify, there is a gracious working in ourselves. The Spirit deals inwardly with those to whom we speak outwardly; so as to make our speaking tell on them. But more than that, He deals with us; with ourselves directly; so as to make our speaking to others tell for good on our own souls. His dealing is still in the line of discovery and enlightenment. In the course of our witnessing for Christ and of Christ, and in connection with our witnessing for Christ and of Christ, the Spirit enlarges our capacity of apprehending Christ, and enables us to receive more abundantly out of His abundance of grace and truth, "even grace for grace." This may be regarded as a sort of personal acknowledgment and recompense of our fidelity in witness-bearing. Like the "quality of mercy when not strained," that fidelity is twice blessed. A large increase of spiritual insight and sympathy, as regards Christ and all His fulness, is the appropriate recognition and reward of a full and faithful testifying for Christ.

R. S. CANDLISH, *The Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers*, p. 239.

THE Two Witnesses to Christ.

I. Consider first the witness of the Apostles. The Lord speaks of the Apostles as being His witnesses because they

had been with Him from the beginning; in other words, they knew what Christ had said and what He had done, and they were able therefore to report the same to the world. They were *witnesses;* their great work, in life or in death, was still to shout in the ears of an unbelieving world the good news that Jesus Christ had come, and that He had died and risen again. As long as they lived, they had no other ambition than to tell their tale and persuade men to believe it; and if they died, they considered that nothing could be more joyful and blessed and honourable than the martyr's or witness's crown.

II. Nothing can be more simple than the words of the Lord in the second verse of the text, when taken alone. But the Lord has not put them alone. On the other hand, He has put them in very striking connection with the words of the first verse. There is to be another witness beside the Apostles, and one differing from them in most essential particulars. This witness is called emphatically the Spirit of Truth, by which I suppose we may understand not merely the Spirit who loves and speaks truth, to whom all hypocrisy and lies are an abomination, but the Spirit who spreads and propagates truth, who makes men love it, moves their hearts towards it, carries it into their minds, writes it upon their consciences. We may alone conclude from the fact of the Spirit of Truth being sent from the Father to testify of Christ, that His mission was absolutely necessary; that witness could not be borne to Christ to any good purpose without Him; that mankind would never come to an unanimous verdict, unless this witness were sent direct from heaven to give evidence in the court of men's hearts. Christ thus taught us that in the work of preaching His Gospel to the world, and converting men from the power of Satan unto God, there are two agents who must labour together; and that therefore it is neither wise nor right to disparage the part which has to be performed by one, in comparison of that which has to be performed by the other. There is the human work and the Divine work; the witness of man without, the witness of the Spirit within.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 217.

REFERENCES: xv. 27.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 32; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 272. xvi. 1-4.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 434. xvi. 1-7.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 26. xvi. 5.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 227. xvi. 5-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 196.

xvi. 5-15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 228; A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 437. xvi. 6, 7.—Bishop Browne, *The Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 35. xvi. 6-22.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 226.

Chap. xvi., ver. 7.—**"It is expedient for you that I go away," etc.**

CHRIST'S Going Away our Gain.

The departure of our Lord was the disciples' gain, and it is ours. It is the gain of His whole Church on earth. Let us see how this can be.

I. And first, because by His departure His local presence was changed into an universal presence. He had dwelt among them as man, under the limitations of our humanity; in Galilee and Jerusalem, on the mountain and in the upper chamber, they had known Him according to the measures and laws of our nature. He had thereby revealed to them His very and true manhood. They had yet greater things to learn. They had to learn His very and true Godhead, His Divine and infinite majesty. And this was to be revealed from a higher sphere and by a mightier revelation of Himself. The day of Pentecost was the enlargement of His presence from a local and visible shape to an invisible and universal fulness. As the Father dwells in the Son, so the Son in the Holy Ghost.

II. His departure changed their imperfect knowledge into the full illumination of faith. While He was yet with them, He taught them by word of mouth. But the mysteries of His passion and resurrection were not as yet fulfilled, and their hearts were slow of understanding. The truth itself lay hid in Him. But when the Comforter came, all things were brought back to their remembrance. Old truths and perplexing mysteries received their true solution. Their very faculties were enlarged; they were no longer pent up by narrow senses and by the succession of time, but were lifted into a light where all things are boundless and eternal. A new power of insight was implanted in their spiritual being, and a new world rose up before it; for the spirit of truth dwelt in them, and the world unseen was revealed.

III. And lastly, Christ's departure changed the partial dispensations of grace into the fulness of the regeneration. It is expedient, then, for us, that He has gone unto the Father. If He had tarried upon earth, all had stood still. It would have been as a perpetual promise of day, a lingering blossom and a retarded fruit, a lengthening childhood and a backward maturity.

The word of God is ever unfolding and advancing. When He was upon earth, all was local, exterior, and imperfect; now all is universal, inward, and Divine. The corn of wheat is not alone. It hath borne much fruit, even an hundredfold; and its fruit is multiplied, in all ages and in all the earth, by a perpetual growth and a perpetual reproduction.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 86.

THE Invisible Government of Christ through His Spirit.

I. The Holy Spirit, in His direct, as in His subordinate or instrumental presence, is the agent, not of disjunction, but of combination, between the faithful and their Lord; Christ still continuing the fontal reservoir of all the graces communicated. The clearest general view of the agency of the Holy Spirit may be obtained by considering it as the counterpart to that tremendous activity of the Spirit of Darkness which has continued incessantly since the Fall of Man. Satan perpetually imitates the operations of God. The evil spirit has the advantage of priority in each soul as it springs to life, and he uses it. No poison so virulent can leave the constitution as it found it, and the Spirit of God in this world has to wander among ruins.

II. The nature of evil being the association of an accursed element with our nature, it surely would seem that it must, in accordance with all the intimations of Holy Writ, be met and counteracted by the introduction of an element of holiness really abiding as it is abiding, really distinct as it is distinct, the seed of eternal life as it is of death eternal. The original corruption consists, not in the evil of every faculty, but in the superadded presence of a principle, once inherent in Adam, thence by the spirit of evil perpetuated to us, which governs the will and perverts the faculties into the machinery of sin. The regenerating gift must in like manner consist, not in the annihilation of any of our natural faculties, but in the indwelling of a principle once inherent in Christ, and from Him transmitted to all who in Him are born of the Spirit—a principle which as it advances displaces its rival, as it retreats admits it; when it shall make us wholly its own, shall wholly dispossess it; when it deserts us, yields the heart once more and altogether to ruin.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 272.

CHRIST'S Departure the Condition of the Spirit's Advent.

I. IT is clear that our Lord speaks here of His ascension to

the Father as the departure which was necessarily to precede the advent of the Comforter. The true nature or ultimate ground of the connection which subsisted between the ascension of Christ into Heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit to enrich the Church is, of course, to us quite incomprehensible. The economy of the spiritual world being as certainly regulated by immutable laws of Divine wisdom as that of the world of sensible experience, we may conceive the one event as necessarily a pre-condition to the other as the members of any physical sequence whatever. And when we remember the limits of our knowledge in the latter case, we need not be much surprised at our ignorance in the former.

II. No one, whose inmost spirit has been busy with the New Testament, can fail to be aware that there is everywhere a profound community or even identity of nature intimated between the heavenly world itself and a state of spiritual-mindedness on earth, altogether transcending the mere notion of recompense or sequel. It is as if heaven itself was already, though faintly, realised in the soul, and that some rather accidental than essential obstacle delayed its consummation, as if the sanctified spirit were there, but from a temporary defect of vision could not see or enjoy it. Now, if a connection so intimate do subsist between the two departments of the great empire of grace, it seems highly consistent that that seed should be issued originally from heaven which is to flower here as heaven's image, and to bear its immortal fruits in heaven's own climate.

III. The Holy Spirit was also the fruit of a victory, and dispensed as the gift of triumph. It ought not, then, to be given till the triumph was consummated by the entrance into glory; it could not be given till the victory was publicly evidenced by the appearance of the living sacrifice—priest and victor—in the presence of the expectant Father, the enlargement of the kingdom following naturally and immediately on the recognised defeat of the power of evil, by the principle of righteousness incarnate in Christ.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 289.

THE Expediency of Christ's Invisibility.

I. We know that Christ, being God as well as man, deserved and received adoration during the days of His flesh. In all the instances of this unqualified adoration, however, it is not certain how far we can answer for the absolute purity of the motives of all the adorers. Men might worship a God in the spirit of

idolatry, if they worshipped only the human element of His complex nature. Now, this is just the result which the visible presence of Christ might be apprehended to produce. Perpetually familiar with the humanity, it is scarcely conceivable that men could fix a steady gaze upon the Deity it enshrined. Assuredly such a power of abstraction is not within the habits of the mass of mankind; and yet it is only under this condition that Christ can be legitimately adored with the unbounded homage of the entire man.

II. The principle of faith is the basis and the condition of the spiritual life. The faith which clings to an absent Saviour is very fitly made the connecting link between the reality of this world and the reality of the world to come; and the imagination, under the guidance of Reason and Revelation, anticipates, and by anticipating prepares for the heaven which the purified senses are yet to apprehend by direct experience. Christ stands aloof and superintends the work, Himself unseen, because He knows that at present His visible presence would interfere with the completion of the process. Faith, to qualify for glory, must fight at a disadvantage; love must seek its beloved through clouds and darkness, but could not hereafter know itself for the grace it is; joy must rejoice with trembling and smile through tears, if it will echo the song of Moses and the Lamb.

III. If it were mysteriously requisite that the Captain of our Salvation should be, in relation to His office, perfected through sufferings, it is equally fitting that the many sons to be led to glory should be led through the same pathway of sorrow; that they should be, like Him, undignified and unsustained by the visible patronage of heaven; that, their perfection being wrought out like His, they should present, and glory to present, the counterpart of every grief He bore.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 257.

HELP from an Absent Saviour.

It was expedient that Christ should go away—

I. Because the great work for which He came lay as yet unaccomplished. He must depart to finish His work and their salvation. He had read to them the lesson of life; now He had to read to them the still more wonderful lessons of death; now He had to break through the inexorable door, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The pathway of His degradation was the highway of the world's salvation.

II. To reveal to the disciples the true proportions of His

exalted being. Hitherto they had known Christ after the flesh; henceforth they were to know Him so no more. Yes, the Saviour would gain by leaving that little band. How often, in the after years of active ministry, they would recall the old scenes and impressions, the loved walks and words! How, in such mourning, the Lord would gain in their hearts, their eyes overflowing with tears! Divinity would rise out of that manhood.

III. It was expedient to develop their own character. As long as He was with them, they would lean even too selfishly on Him. His departure roused them to action. Men's hearts had to be trained by sorrow and hardship, by trial and suffering; and so He would go away and leave them to themselves —quit them visibly. It was a true, Divine, human lesson; it was rooted in the very deeps of our moral progressive being; it was a lasting theme for faith and aspiration, and effort and hope; and, instead of a life merely in the present, it was a crown held before them in the future.

IV. And, finally, our Lord included all when He Himself gave the reason for His departure. He goes, really the better to help our infirmities. It was that He might be the channel of Divine influence to the world. He is here, by His promise, the Comforter. Thus, Christ daily helps our infirmities—infirmity of will, that paralysis of our moral being—of temper, of speech, of knowledge.

Learn then (1) the reason of Christ's absence from you. It is expedient, and not unkind. When our Lord's absence is no more useful to us, then He will come again and receive us to Himself. In life it is so. He leaves us (*a*) to show us Himself; (*b*) to show us ourselves. (2) Learn the expediency of our dead friends' farewell. They are saying to us, in their shrouds and winding-sheets, "It is expedient we go away; we leave you to work for you and with you, and shall be the better fitted to meet you when it is done."

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Sermons*, p. 274.

I. ONE reason of the expediency of the Ascension which must strike a modern believer in our Lord Jesus Christ is, that it seems to him to secure an adequate sense of the true place and dignity of man among the creatures of God. There are several lines of thought—I had almost said, there are some great studies —which, at least as they are sometimes handled, tend to create a degraded and false idea of man. But the Christian falls back

upon a distinct fact, which enables him to listen with interest and with sympathy to all that the astronomer, or the physiologist, or chemist, may have to tell him, and withal to preserve the robust faith in the dignity of man; he believes in the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven. Somewhere in space, he knows—somewhere there is at this moment, intimately and for ever associated with the glories of the self-existing Dignity—a human body and a human soul. Ay, it is on the throne of the universe!

II. The expediency of the resurrection is further traceable in the effect which it may produce upon life and character by making room for faith in Christ, and by colouring the whole character of distinctly Christian worship. If Christ our Lord had continued to be visibly present among us, there would have been no room for true faith in Him. If we are to give our hearts and wills to the Author and End of our existence; if our Christian worship is not to be a coldly calculated compliment, but the outcome of a pure and of a soul-consuming passion—then it is well that on the heights of heaven should throb to all eternity a human heart, the sacred heart of Jesus, and that, in the adoration which we pay Him, we should know that we are extending the inmost resources of our nature at the feet of the one Being who has upon them the claim of relationship as well as the claim of duty.

III. And a last reason for the expediency of our Lord's departure is to be found in His connection with His present and continuous work of intercession in heaven. He has entered, so the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, into the holiest place of all, as the High Priest of Christendom. But while every Jewish priest stood ministering and offering often the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins, "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God." It is the knowledge that the great work, on which Jesus Christ our Lord entered at His ascension, proceeds uninterruptedly, that makes hope and perseverance possible when hearts are failing, when temptation is strong, when the sky is dark and lurid. Surely it is expedient for you and me that He should go away!

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 273.

THE Mission of the Comforter.

There are three facts which are plainly revealed in Scripture about the coming of the Holy Spirit.

I. It is evident that in some sense the Holy Ghost had come upon men, and had dwelt amongst them, even from the first. That God should say, "My Spirit shall not always strive with men," implies that the Spirit did strive with them during a certain time. That David should pray, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me," "Uphold me with Thy free Spirit," implied, of course, that he had enjoyed the presence and assistance of that Spirit.

II. And yet, in the second place, nothing can be more plain than that the Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost, after a totally different fashion from any in which He had come before. It cannot be too strongly expressed that His coming then was an altogether new thing, never before experienced by man, and making an epoch in human history as remarkable and as blessed as that made by the birth of Christ Himself. It was to the Church, in another sphere, what the Incarnation was to the world; if the redeemed world of God date her years from the birth of His Divine Son, His chosen Church counts her age from the Pentecostal coming of His Divine Spirit.

III. In the third place, it is also plain that this change, so unspeakably important, in the manner of the presence of the Holy Ghost, was dependent on and consequent on the finished work of Christ. His presence in us is based on that humanity which is common to Christ and to us, and it is charged with all that was powerful in His atoning sacrifice, with all that was holy and victorious in His life. He comes to minister to us, all that Christ earned by His obedience to our nature, to set forward and continue in us the life that Christ lived in our nature. The Holy Ghost came at Pentecost with the life and victory and immortality of the glorified Son of Man, and bestowed them for ever on the Church.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 276.

WE can easily understand that it was in the delicacy of our Saviour's life to feel very jealous lest any of His people should think for a moment that His going away from this world would make any change in His feelings. To us now such a supposition may seem ridiculous, but not to them. Is not history full of such things—men who have bound themselves to a great and spontaneous effort of affection, and when it is done, the heart, like a plant exhausted with its one flower, has lapsed, if not into its apathy, yet certainly into a very low level of feeling? We very seldom sustain anything which rises above the level

of mediocrity. It might be in part to meet such a thought that our Lord spoke the words of my text. Look now at one or two of the reasons why it was good for the Church that Christ's visible presence should be taken away from it.

I. God has so constituted us that a state of pure simple faith, *i.e.*, of dealing with the unseen, is essential to the development of the highest and best faculties of our nature. The best reason I can give for this is, that ultimately we shall all of us have to do with spirit; and therefore we are now disciplined to deal with what is only spiritual, that we may be prepared for perfectly spiritual intercourse.

II. But the departure of Christ was chiefly characterised as being introductory to the descent of the Holy Ghost. Was it not a part of the expansion of the covenant, a note preparatory to the larger developments which were coming, when He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away?"

III. The things which are opening now, during Christ's absence, are to prepare us and make us capable of that Presence. Already God is working towards that point. The expediency of Christ going away was, because, if He should come then in His glory, we were not ready to receive Him. But now He is making us ready to receive Him, that it may be "expedient" for us that He should come back again.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 216.

MYSTERIES.

The peculiarity of the Bible mysteries is this, that they are always associated with life, never with mere thought. They always present themselves to the view of the disciple rather than to that of the mere student; they always address the heart quite as much as the intellect. Observe how very little there is of what can be called speculative revelation in the Bible. The Bible teaches us not how to think, but how to live; and treats the thinking as part of living.

I. Take the doctrine contained in the words of the text, namely, the gift of the Holy Spirit, as an instance of the method which is always observed in the Bible in revealing mysteries. There is nowhere any distinct statement in the Bible of the attributes of the Holy Ghost, or of the part which He takes to Himself in dealing with us. What the Holy Ghost precisely is, and even what He precisely does, is nowhere defined. There is no philosophy of His existence given us. But if this is not given, what is given? Wherever the Holy Spirit acts on our

life, there we are told how we can see His action. Wherever He can comfort, strengthen, enlighten, there we meet with a promise that we shall find Him. Whatever is needed to enable us to reverence Him, worship Him, obey Him, that is revealed.

II. One word on the bearing of this mystery on our own lives. In ordinary times, our consciences seem to us no more than one of the faculties of the soul. The guidance that they give does not seem very much to differ in kind from the light given by the understanding, from the influence exerted by the feelings. But every now and then we know that this is not so. Every now and then, that spiritual voice which we call the conscience, seems to rise up within us into a separate being; seems to command, to forbid, to warn us with an awful authority; seems to assert a claim to obedience, even to the death; seems to sting and pierce, or else to inspire or uplift, the soul with a power altogether beyond the power of earth. This is assuredly nothing less than the revelation of the Holy Spirit, which we read in the pages of the New Testament. Then, if we have eyes to see the truth, shall we recognise that the voice which speaks to us is the voice of the Divine Person who has promised to guide all Christians.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 162.

REFERENCES: xvi. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 574; vol. xxviii., No. 1662; H. Wace, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 202; A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 110; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 64; Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 52; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 287; vol. x., p. 253; J. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 282; T. Howell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 133; T. Gasquoine, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 229; H. P. Liddon, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 273; J. Graham, *Ibid.*, p. 280; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 138; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 546; vol. xiv., p. 303; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 406. xvi. 7-11.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 140; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xix., p. 245. xvi. 7-33.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 224.

Chap. xvi., ver. 8.—**"And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin," etc.**

LOOK—

I. At the Holy Spirit's operations, as set forth under the New Testament. At one time He is represented as exerting influence upon the understanding. The eyes are opened; the faculty of spiritual discernment is bestowed; the dead letter quickens into a living and sublime reality, and our heart burns within us, as fresh, warm light from heaven streams in upon the

sacred word. At other times, the influence seems to be exerted upon the will. The strongholds of the ancient enemy are cast down; the soul is led onwards by the constraint of a sweet captivity, and drawn upwards by the bonds of love. Whilst at other times, the work of the Holy Spirit seems to lie directly with the affections of the heart. Then there is shadowed forth the love of God; we feel the presence and power of a new affection; we are urged on by the inspiration of grateful emotion. "The love of Christ constraineth us," because this love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which He hath given us.

II. Consider the especial work of the Spirit—the reproving or convincing of sin. To convince of unbelief, is to convince of an estranged heart. We should believe more if we loved more; if the persuasion were more habitually cherished; if God's deep tenderness, and the fire of holy gratitude, were kindled on the altar of our languid faith. There is nothing for which we are plainly more responsible than first convictions of sin; they bear marks of, and come direct from God. They follow no law, they are confined to no instrument, they wait no opportunities, and yet they come armed with a force which challenges our obstinacy to disregard, and defies our philosophy to explain. Resisted convictions will in time destroy all religious sensibility. As the difficulty lessens, so also does the pain. Resistance unites resistance, and the heart, like an anvil, grows harder for each succeeding stroke. Instead of resisting first convictions of sin, use all means to deepen them. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

D. MOORE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3357.

REFERENCES: xvi. 8.—S. Baring Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, pp. 155, 157; Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 185. xvi. 8, 9.—R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 143.

Chap. xvi., vers. 8-10.—**"And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me: of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more."**

I. THE first point of thought suggested here, is the ground on which the charge is founded—"of sin, because they believe not on Me."

II. Note the way in which the Comforter, by revealing Christ, answers the cry for forgiveness, and for power to become righteous. "He shall convince the world of righteousness

because I go to the Father." It is not Christ crucified only, but Christ risen and ascended, who reveals a righteousness for man. Three of man's necessities—the assurance of forgiveness of the past, the removal of the terrors of the future, the creation of a new manhood in the present—are all met by the truth that Christ has gone to the Father; and when that is revealed by the Comforter, we have the conviction of righteousness.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 14.

REFERENCES: xvi. 8-11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1708; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 286; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 484. xvi. 9.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 11th series, pp. 205, 213.

Chap. xvi., vers. 9-11.

CONVICTION of Sin by the Cross.

It is a fixed expectation of Christ Himself, that His mission to the world will have a considerable part of its value in raising a higher moral sense in mankind, and producing a more appalling conviction of their guilt or guiltiness before God.

I. Conviction of sin is a profoundly intelligent matter, and worthy in that view to engage the counsel of God in the gift of His Son. The sense of guilt is itself a pain of the mind, just as light is pain to a diseased eye; but light is none the less truly light, and guilt is none the less truly intelligent, on that account. The returning of guilty conviction is, in fact, the dawning, or may be, of an everlasting and complete intelligence, in just the highest, moral side of the nature, that was going down out of intelligence into stupor and blindness. Is it, then, a severity in Christ that He is counting on a result of His ministry and death so essentially great and beneficent?

II. It is quite evident that such a Being as Christ could not come into the world, and pass through it and out of it in such a manner, without stirring the profoundest possible convictions of character. If the Divine glory and spotless love of God are by Him incarnated into the world, the revelation must be one that raises a great inward commotion. Every guilty mind will feel itself arraigned and brought to know itself, that beholds or looks into the perfect glass of history that describes this life. And, above all, when it is ended by such a death, inflicted by a world in wrong, who that knows himself to be a man will not be visited by silent pangs, not easy to be stifled.

III. Christ was a Being who perfectly knew the pure standards of character and duty, knowing as well what sin is in

the breach of them, and what man is in the sin. He knew exactly what to do on all occasions, and with all classes of men, to put the sense of guilt upon them ; and we can see ourselves that He has it for one of the great objects of His ministry, even as it was a great expectation, in the matter of His death, that all enemies and rejectors would discover, in bitter pangs of conviction, that, in what they have done upon Him, they have only let their sin reveal its own madness.

IV. In the Scriptures we find many tokens that Christ, before His coming, was expected to come in this character ; and also many declarations by Himself and His followers afterward, that He had, especially in His death, accomplished such a result.

V. A very bad act often brings out the show of a bad spirit within, and becomes, in that manner, a most appalling argument of conviction. Hence the immense convincing power to be exerted on mankind through the crucifixion of Christ by His enemies. It rolls back on our thought in a kind of silent horror, that will not always be repelled, that the manifested love of God, impartial and broad as the world, a grace for every human creature, is yet gnashed upon by the world and crucified.

VI. I think I may assert with confidence, that there is no man living who is not made conscious at times of sin, by the simple fact of his own rejection of Christ. No matter what may be reasoned by infidels and Christian speculatists about, against, or for the historic person of Christ ; if He is a fiction only, or a myth, a romance of character, got up by three or four of the most unromantic writers in the world, still He is the greatest, solidest, most real truth, ever known to man. The Christ of the New Testament is the want, consciously or unconsciously, of every human heart ; and that, aching secretly for Him, it aches the more that it has Him not, and still the more that it will not have Him. "He shall convince of sin, because they believe not on Me."

H. BUSHNELL, *Christ and His Salvation*, p. 98.

REFERENCES : xvi. 10.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 11th series, p. 229.

Chap. xvi., ver. 11.—"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

THESE words present two thoughts—a fact, and a conviction founded on that fact.

I. Christ's conquest over the kingdom of evil It was a conquest won for man, and for this two things were requisite—

Christ must overcome the essence of evil by a means common to humanity; and He must show in His conquest, that the facts which seemed to prove the perpetuity of evil were the signs of its overthrow.

II. Christ's conquest and pledge of victory for man. (1) The fact itself is a power. (2) Christ is God's promise. (3) Christ a present friend.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 29.

REFERENCES: xvi. 10.—G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to my Friends*, p. 44; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 165.

Chap. xvi., ver. 12.—"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

GRADUAL Revelations.

The thought which our Saviour here expressed was in strict accordance with His whole method of life. He was always measuring what and how much His followers could bear, for He was that true wisdom which cometh down from above and is always gentle.

I. And here let us notice the blessedness of having the mind placed under God's own direct teaching. The great power of a teacher lies in being able to have sympathy with the mind of his scholar. God, who knows exactly the real state and power of everyone's heart, marvellously suits the lesson to the capacity, and leads on as we can bear it. The child has the child's milk, and the giant has the giant's meat.

II. But the subject opens to us another field of thought. We are all placed in this world as in a school; we have all to learn of God, His being, His word, His work, His love, His glory. All other knowledge springs out of that knowledge. The Cross itself, the whole life and death of Jesus Christ were, after all, a means to know God. Now, this knowledge lies in a long series, and the different parts range one above another in a continual scale, and by these ranges of knowledge we are all ascending. Now God's system is this: He gives knowledge as a certain reward and privilege to particular states of heart. The spiritual intellect will advance as the spiritual state improves. This principle is contained in that important verse: "If any man will do My will, he shall know of the doctrine." Consequently, the way to grow in Divine wisdom is continually to be attaining a more humble, affectionate, holy, pure, praying, active condition of life. And any man who would be wise, must be patient in the cultivation of his affections; otherwise he cannot receive truth, or if he

received it, he could not bear it. If any man without an adequate spiritual preparation were to be admitted at once into the occupations of the blessed, they would be to that man either intensely dull or witheringly grand.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 283.

THE Changed Aspect of Christian Theology.

I. As regards Christian theology, two things appear to be true. (1) That the Revelation of Christ was taught by the Church through forms, both of doctrine and practice, which were created by the spirit of the world, and that it could not have been received at all except it had been taught through these forms; that therefore the imperial and aristocratic elements in the Church were not created by the religious body acting alone, but by the whole spirit of the age. (2) That in spite of the forms in which the universal ideas of Christ were cast being evil, though not known as evil then, they entered into men's hearts, and in their slow growth is to be sought the real work of the Spirit of God in the development of Christianity. But that inner indirect influence in men's hearts worked against those forms and slowly undermined them, and we look to the ideas which the Spirit of God has evolved in history out of the seeds which Christ sowed for the truest form of His revelation, not to the forms into which the Church threw only a portion of the thoughts of Christ.

II. Now for the first time in history and after a sustained battle, we have nearly worked up to the level at which Christ wrote, we stand upon His platform; we know what He meant when He said: "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." There is a clear path of progress before us, and it will not be long before we may run along it with joy, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Those within the Church who see the position at which the world has arrived have a clear duty, a noble work to do. They have (1) to take away from theology, and especially from its idea of God and His relation to man, all exclusive and limited conceptions. They have to bring the outer teaching of Christ's revelation up to the level of that inner one which has now become outward in society and politics; to confess and accept this as the work of God. (2) Their teaching in the Church should heartily, but temperately, go with the ideas that are collected round the words, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, not serving the wild image which France made of them, but the

image which an honest and just idealism presents to our hope. The Church should get nearer in spirit and in life to Him who was the intimate friend of the poor, whom the common people gladly heard, and who never hesitated one instant to proclaim ideas which He knew would overthrow the existing conditions of society.

S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 1.

THE Continuing Life of Christ on Earth.

I. If the life of Christ were visibly to continue on earth and to influence the earth, that continued life and influence must of necessity bear a close resemblance to the life that Christ once lived among His countrymen, and to the influence that He for years exercised over them. Is that what we find? Christ's life was for many years an unobserved life, till His mighty words and loving deeds could be no longer hid. What of His life continued on and by the Holy Spirit, His life infused into His body, the Church, and into us, the individual members of that body. Are not the same marks visibly imprinted? The feature of quiet, unobserved growth marked both the common life of our Lord on earth and His supernaturally continued life on earth as well.

II. Wherever Christ went in Syria, the hearts of men acknowledged Him, some by opposition, some by submission. Where that continued life now goes, the same results follow, as the slow time unrolls itself towards the final judgment. Across a chasm of 1800 years, Christ makes a demand which of all others is most difficult to satisfy. He asks for that which a philosopher may often seek in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother. He asks for the human heart, and He will have it all to Himself. He demands it unconditionally, and forthwith the demand is granted. In defiance of time and space, the soul of man with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. The continued power of the mighty drawing of the unseen love of Jesus Christ our Lord is at once one of the greatest tokens of the presence of His abiding love with us, and one of the most unanswerable proofs of the absolute truth of Christianity.

III. There are two points which we may briefly take here. The first is the message of warning which such a fact conveys to us. Think you not that the disciples took heed to their words, to their deeds, to their habits of life, when, in those

forty days, they felt that, all unseen by them, the Lord might be so close to them, and might at any moment manifest Himself to them? We are as near to God as they were. Are we as careful? Secondly, there are both the strength and comfort that flow down to us from the fact of the nearness of Christ to us, near to us in His house, near to us in His church, near to us in His sacraments, in prayer, in our hearts. The life of our God is continued even now upon earth, and where that life is, there is the full, unending, irresistible power by which God will lead us from strength to strength, until at length we come to appear before our God in Sion.

B. WILBERFORCE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 22.

REFERENCES: xvi. 12.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 308; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 270; Parker, *Cavendish Pulpit*, p. 70; A. K. H. B., *Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 71; H. Bonner, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 84; H. P. Liddon, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 257; *Easter Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 294.

Chap. xvi., vers. 12, 13.—**"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."**

IN these words our Lord describes two sorts of persons—those who cannot yet bear the truth, and those who, through the guiding of the Spirit, are led into all truth. They who could not yet bear it were, we see, our Lord's disciples; they who had followed Him from the beginning of His ministry; they, of whom He had just before said, that they were all clean, except Judas, who betrayed Him. Still, He had much to say which they could not yet bear, but which they should be able to bear and to understand, when the Spirit of truth should come and lead them into all truth. These words were applicable to our Lord's twelve first disciples, and they are much more applicable to many of us. There are many in every age who cannot bear all that Christ has to say unto them, because they are not yet led by the Spirit, and neither their heart nor their understanding can receive the perfect truth.

I. If we want a more ancient example of this, the whole history of the Old Testament will furnish one. The hardness of the hearts of the Israelites was the reason why they were allowed some things, which in a riper state of knowledge men would shrink from; but there are many who are in this respect Israelites among us, there are many who are yet living under the

law, and who cannot yet understand or feel the voice of the Spirit. Christ has many things to say unto them, but they cannot bear them now.

II. The whole of the Gospel message is a comfort to those who feel themselves sinners; to those whose consciences trouble them, and who fear the anger of God and wish to flee from it. It is a medicine for the sick, which they who do not feel themselves sick, cannot be persuaded to care for. It is vain to talk to men of Christ, till they feel their want of Him; it is idle to speak to them of the mercy of their redemption, till they have some sense of the danger from which they have been redeemed. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; but Christ will never be sought by those who have never learned to fear the law.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 64.

THE Purposed Incompleteness of Christ's Teaching.

I. These words show, first of all, that our Lord's own teaching during His sojourn upon this earth, did not embrace all necessary Christian doctrine. A man, then, who should think himself a good Christian for keeping only to the words of Christ, would deceive himself. He could not keep only to the words of Christ if he really kept to all the words of Christ, for among the words of Christ is the saying in the text which states as clearly as possible that over and above Christ's actual teaching there were truths to be taught in His name and by His direct authority, truths which, as coming from Him, although through others, Christians were to receive and believe.

II. Why was our Lord's teaching thus incomplete—incomplete according to His own will and announcement? Why did He not Himself teach all that could properly be called Christian doctrine? The answer is that the same motive which led Him to teach men at all, led Him to impose these limits, these restraints, these delays, upon His process of teaching. He taught men in their ignorance because He loved them too well to leave them in it. He taught men gradually, and as they were able to bear the strong light of truth, because He loved them too well to shock or blind them by a sudden blaze of that truth, for which in its fulness they were as yet unprepared. The full understanding of who He was and what He came to do was preceded by a twilight. That twilight was itself His own work, and it brightened more and more, moment by moment, towards the day. He rose amidst the mists of imperfect apprehension—of misapprehensions—as to who and what He

was; and not until He was high in the heavens did He permit the full truth to break upon the intelligence of the world. In this He was true to God's providential action throughout human history. All along the course of the ages God has taught men gradually. The old Jewish Scriptures were a long series of revelations—the patriarchal first, then the Mosaic, then the prophetical, each being a great advance on its predecessor, and all leading up to the final and complete revelation of God in Christ.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 581. (See also *Easter Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 279.)

REFERENCES: xvi. 12, 13.—E. Bickersteth, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 225. xvi. 12-14.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 208. xvi. 12-15.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 237.

Chap. xvi., ver. 13.—**"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth," etc.**

NOTICE two out of many errors to be avoided in the search for truth—over-confidence and indifference.

I. I call those over-confident who see no difficulties. To judge from their conversation and demeanour there are many such. Nothing is more attractive, more irresistible than the confidence of one who has strong convictions, who has surpassed his difficulties, who rides at anchor with a noble carelessness on the ebb and flow of human opinion, for he has received Christ into his boat, and is in the haven where he would be. But wait—is the confidence of ignorance attractive? Is the security of blindness a sign of power? A very moderate experience of life will teach you to discern between those who have won their position for themselves by diligent enquiry, and those who in society assume the post of teachers before they have had the heart to become learners. The process of learning is gradual, whatever be its subject. Modesty, perseverance, and an honest love of the truth, are indispensable to its success. The study of art, the investigation of history, the acquirement of languages, a discriminating taste for poetry, a knowledge of business,—these come not by instinct, or in a flash of light. And so it is with our enquiry into religious subjects. It may be said of this domain of the Christian's life as of his moral perfection, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

II. The error of indifference is of a very different kind, and may be briefly stated. It is often accompanied by a profession

of pious veneration for the devotional and practical teaching of Holy Scripture, and as often by an abdication of all the privileges which an intelligent mind may claim in the study of the book. Modesty and patience are the ruling principles of an enquiring mind. Both arise from an honest love of truth. Let those especially who have not yet stiffened into inveterate habits, strive after that character of mind which they admire in those whom they would choose for friends. Let them fix their eyes so fast on Him who is above all controversy, as to sail with a strong bent and graceful ease through the spray cast up by the fretful waters at the bow; the swifter the speed and the straighter the course, the higher the spray is flung, but we have passed along our course before it falls.

C. W. FURSE, *Sermons*, p. 96.

NOTE:—

I. The Spirit guiding into all truth in respect of revelation. (1) This means that the Spirit will speak the truth and nothing but the truth, "for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." It is impossible to be original in speaking the truth—originality is the exclusive property of falsehood. (2) The words further teach that the Holy Spirit will inspire the truth, the truth already extant in the world, and only waiting the breath of inspiration to quicken it. (3) The Holy Spirit further revealed new truths, truths otherwise inaccessible to created intelligences. The truths of the Gospel are His deep things—too deep for human reason ever to fathom, but which nevertheless God has shown to us by His Spirit.

II. The Spirit guiding into all truth in respect of exposition. In other words, the Spirit guiding the readers of the Bible to understand it: "He will guide you into all truth." (1) This sets forth the nature of the Spirit's influence. "He will *guide* you into all truth;" this word "guide" meaning to show the road, and not only to show it, but to travel along it. The Holy Spirit takes the hand, as it were, and leads the soul to a reasonable apprehension of the great doctrines of salvation. (2) Observe also the *subjects* of His guidance. "He will guide you"—not the Apostles only, but you also. The Spirit influences the mental movements of the weakest saint. (3) The words further indicate the scope of the Spirit's influence. "He will guide you into all truth"—not into some, but all.

III. The Spirit guiding into all truth in respect of applica-

tion. In other words, the Spirit guiding the ministers of the Gospel to apply and enforce the truth. (1) This suggests that the Spirit *whets* the truth, that He may put edge on the ministry of the word. (2) In conclusion, the Spirit imparts warmth to the ministry. "He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Warmth is an essential element in the inspiration of the ministry.

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in St. John*, p. 300.

REFERENCES: xvi. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 50; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 396; J. Clifford, *The Dawn of Manhood*, p. 98.

Chap. xvi., ver. 14.—**"He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."**

CHRIST Manifested in Remembrance. Consider:—

I. In what special way the Holy Ghost gives glory to the Son of God. The special way in which God the Holy Ghost gave glory to God the Son seems to have been His revealing Him as the only begotten Son of the Father, who had appeared as the Son of Man. Our Saviour said most plainly that He was the Son of God; but it is one thing to declare the whole truth, another to receive it. Our Saviour said all that need be said, but His Apostles understood Him not. Apparently it was not till after His resurrection, and especially after His ascension, when the Holy Ghost descended, that the Apostles understood who had been with them. When all was over they knew it, not at the time. Such is God's rule in Scripture, to dispense His blessings silently and secretly, so that we do not discern them at the time, except by faith afterwards only, of which we have two special instances in the very outline of the Gospel history: the mission of our Saviour, who was not understood till afterwards to be the Son of God most High; and the mission of the Holy Ghost, which was still more laden with spiritual benefits, and is still more secret.

II. And hence it is perchance that years that are past bear in retrospect so much of fragrance with them, though at the time perhaps we saw little in them to take pleasure in; or rather we did not, could not, realise that we were receiving pleasure, though we received it. We feel at the time; we recognise and reason afterwards. Such is the sweetness and softness with which days long passed away fall upon the memory and strike us. The most ordinary years when we seemed to be living for nothing, these shine forth to us in their very regularity and

orderly course. What was sameness at the time, is now stability; what was dulness, is now a soothing calm; what seemed unprofitable, has now its treasure in itself; what was but monotony is now harmony; all is pleasing and comfortable, and we regard it all with affection. Such are the feelings with which men often look back on their childhood, when any accident brings it vividly before them. Some relic or token of that early time, some spot or some book, or a word, or a scent, or a sound, brings them back in memory to the first years of their discipleship, and they then see, what they could not know at the time, that God's presence went up with them and gave them rest. They think that they regret the past, when they are but longing after the future. It is not that they would be children again, but that they would be angels and would see God; they would be immortal beings, crowned with amaranth, robed in white, and with palms in their hands, before His throne.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 253.

REFERENCES: xvi. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 465; E. M. Goulburn, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 94; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 277.

Chap. xvi., vers. 14, 15.

THIS text is a prophecy that Christ's glory, His work, His nature, His teaching, His character should be revealed, brought home to men, progressively; the Holy Spirit should make them more and more clear, should show them to the disciples, open their eyes to them, as time rolled on.

I. It was a prophecy, in the first place, of the full revelation of Christian truth. Christ had lived before the disciples, spoken to them, as they were able to bear it, and His words were in their ears. They would come back to them by and by, when He was gone from them; though even this is attributed in these chapters to the same agency. "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." But how little even the Apostles had understood His words. How were they to be the teachers of the churches? The wonder of Pentecost first fully opened their eyes to the truth, the truth never again doubted for one moment amid all discouragement, of the Divine mission and eternal presence of their Lord; and it was the new power of the gift of Pentecost which gave the clearness and firmness, the variety and the unity to their teaching. They built up the Church of Christ, in its members, its

doctrines, its institutions. And then beyond the Apostolic age, who shall say that the Church has not needed and received the same guidance into truth? "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you,"—the meaning and depth of the Divine words, the fulness and perfection of the Christian character, the limits and the largeness of the Christian revelation.

II. But there is yet another sense in our Lord's promise, and one perhaps that touches us yet more closely. It speaks of the gradual bringing home to men of the full force, the length, the breadth, the measure of the stature of the fulness, of Christ's character. Tradition, though so early busy, never put a trait to that character. Criticism has taken nothing from it. Each Christian age has caught something fresh, learnt something more of it, perhaps even, alas, has forgotten again something. Some lessons have been worked slowly but surely into the heart of humanity, have become so much a part of the world's common heritage, that we begin to forget that though Christians did not learn them fully at once, though men have not learnt to practise them fully even now, they had their origin in Christianity, that is, in Christ. Such are (1) the care for the sick and suffering, for human pain because it is human pain, not merely the pain of a friend. (2) The rights, the sanctity of conscience. (3) The unity, the brotherhood of all mankind.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Sermons in Wellington College*, p. 101.

I. "ALL things that the Father hath are Mine." Our Lord might say thus, first, in respect of His original Godhead; and but for His original Godhead, he could not without blasphemy have said it. It is impossible to explain away this absolute and unrestricted claim of a universal right of property in all that is the Father's; no rank, however high, conferred by God; no offer, however honourable and trustworthy in His kingdom; no gifts, no riches, no endowments, however various and costly, bestowed out of His boundless liberality, could sanction the use of words like these, by any created being, or warrant His saying broadly and without reserve, "All things that the Father hath are Mine."

II. When the Lord said, "All things that the Father hath are Mine," He had respect not only to His original Godhead, but also to His suffering manhood. It is this consideration, indeed, which makes the statement practically important in its application to us. It is as being in our nature, in His character of God man, that the Lord Jesus asserts His title to regard all things that the Father hath as His own. When in reference to

His manhood as well as His eternal Godhead, our Lord stands forth in this attitude of unhesitating confidence, He virtually appeals to the perfection of His righteousness and the sufficiency of His atonement. He proceeds upon the assurance of His finished work of propitiation being accepted by His Father. And as the recompense of that work, He receives, in His human nature, an interest in all that the Father hath.

III. It is as the head of His body, the Church, that Christ says, "All things that the Father hath are Mine." Taking His people as His own, uniting Himself to them, identifying Himself with them, in the character and capacity of their Head He says, "All things that the Father hath are Mine." Through Him all the energy and all the blessedness of His Divine life are diffused, even as from the fertile vine a healthful influence goes forth into all the branches, causing them to rejoice and blossom and bear forth fruit. "All things that the Father hath are His"—His, not to be retained as His own, but to be communicated to His people.

R. S. CANDLISH, *The Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers*, p. 265.

THE Revealings of the Holy Ghost.

I. There are times when words, over which we once shed tears, are meaningless to us as the stones of the desert. And there are times when the oldest and most familiar passages of the Bible wake up to us like a new creation. Why is this? The Spirit has made them to come forth so prominent and so clear. I believe this to be a constant method of His working. The height of some grand truth looks out, through the purified atmosphere of the thoughts, near, accurate, lovely. You see, and you can almost touch, the smallest sands upon the hill-top, because the difficulties have all melted away, hidden meanings have unrolled themselves, clouds of doubt have been destroyed, like mists by the morning light, and so invisible things have become realities and future promises are present property.

II. Or once more. What the Spirit shows He makes a possession. This is the most blessed fact of all. He manifests that a thing is, and whenever He manifests that a thing is, He manifests that it is yours. He seals it to you with the oath and the impress of Almighty God. There are some who have made very high attainments in Divine knowledge—and why? Not because they have any greater intellect, but because the Spirit being glorified in those men, has put forth more of His power, and has shown them more. How are some so very like their

Master? What has made them so? The passing and re-passing of the Holy Spirit, thousands and thousands and tens of thousands of times, from Christ to those hearts; and every time leaving on the soul another and another little line of the transcendent copy. That is the way by which the living likenesses of Jesus are made on some men's hearts. Therefore, wait honouringly on the Spirit. Confess to His supremacy and solitary power to show you truth. Cherish His still movings, His veil-liftings to the understanding, His loving convictions to the conscience—His silken drawings of the affections. If any man perish, it will not be that Christ has not done all for that man's soul, but that He did not seek and cultivate the revealings of the Holy Ghost.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 162.

I. HE shall take or receive of Mine. The Lord speaks of the Holy Ghost as well entitled to take of what is His, as well able and well qualified to do so, and as one whom He would willingly have to do so. (1) The Spirit is well entitled to take of what is Christ's, especially considering that it is what the Father has that is Christ's—because He is Himself a Divine person, one with the Father and the Son. (2) He is not less qualified and able than He is entitled to receive of what is Christ's. For having been with the Father in the ordering of the plan from all eternity, and having been with Christ all along in the accomplishment of it, "He searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God," and in dealing with what is Christ's, He is in His element so to speak, and at home. (2) He is one whom Christ must needs be and is altogether willing to have taking of His. "He shall glorify Me," says Christ Himself; He is of My council, and His sole aim is to carry out My work and to exalt My name.

II. What the Spirit thus takes or receives of Christ's He shows to His Church and people. He does not keep it to Himself, He does not conceal or hide it; He does not intercept or appropriate it. He acts in all good faith, if I may so speak with all reverence, in the way of revealing and transmitting it, so that all that is Christ's may be seen and enjoyed by His believing followers, and Christ Himself may be magnified in their esteem. "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you."

R. S. CANDLISH, *The Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers*, p. 265.

REFERENCES: xvi. 15.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 298; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 239; Bishop Lightfoot, *Christian*

World Pulpit, vol. xxviii., p. 81; J. Vaughan, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 95. B. Baker, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 193. xvi. 15-33.—Parker, *Christian Commonwealth*, vol. vii., p. 155.

Chap. xvi., ver. 16.—**"A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father."**

CHRIST Visible to Loving Hearts.

What Christ here promises is something special and interior; deeper and more intimate; the peculiar gift of those who "keep His commandments." It is a manifestation, not to the eye or to the ear, but to a sense above both hearing and sight; a spiritual sense, comprehending all powers of perception, to which all other senses are but avenues. And this presence is no mere figure, but a reality; this manifestation no empty metaphor, but a showing of Himself to our spiritual sense; a perception which should be equal to the perception of sight in all fulness, vividness, and truth. Let us therefore take an example. What does the sight of any one, as, for instance, of a friend, bestow upon us? What are its effects?

I. The first effect it produces in us is a sense of his presence; we know what his coming and going awakens. It may be, we were waiting for his arrival full of other thoughts, busy or weary, or musing, or all but forgetful. When he came, we were wakened up in every pulse. We see him, recognise him again; he sees us, and fixes our sight upon himself. Some such effect is wrought in faithful hearts by this promise of our Lord. He shows Himself by a secret unveiling of His presence. His disciples' whole life is full of a sense that He is near; and they know, by an inward faculty, that they are living with Him and for Him.

II. Another effect wrought by the sight of a friend, is a perception of his character. We read the fullest and most detailed biographies and imagine the most vivid picture of the subject; but what is all biography to one meeting? Then the moral life which is in the one speaks to the moral sense which is in the other by a language which has no written character. So is it in those who love the Lord Jesus. When He shows Himself by the illumination of the heart, then all they have read turns to reality.

III. We may take one more effect of sight. It gives us a consciousness of the love of a friend for us. There is something in his eye, looks and bearing, which is expressive above all words and emphatic above all speech. So there is a love

with which, as God, Christ loved all mankind eternally; and another deeper love, with which He loved all whom He foreknew would love Him again. In His foreknowledge, all His elect people love Him and are loved. As, one by one, they love Him, He loves them and shows Himself to them. When the disciple whom Jesus loved lay on His breast at supper, the foreknowledge of everlasting love had its fulfilment. So with every one who shall love Him unto the end of the world. "He hath heard of Me by the hearing of the ear, but now his eye shall see Me."

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 105.

THE Spiritual Presence of Christ in the Church.

I. Observe what the promise is in the text and the verses following. A new era was to commence, or what is called in Scripture "a day of the Lord." We know how much is said in Scripture about the awfulness and graciousness of a day of the Lord, which seems to be some special time of visitation, grace, judgment, restoration, righteousness and glory. The day that dawned upon the Church at the Resurrection, and beamed forth in full splendour at the Ascension; that day which has no setting, which will be not ended but absorbed in Christ's glorious appearance from heaven to destroy sin and death; that day in which we now are, is described in these words of Christ as a state of special Divine manifestation, of special introduction into the presence of God. Christ is really with us now, whatever be the mode of it. As God He is ever present, never was otherwise than present, never went away; when His body died on the Cross and was buried, when His soul departed to the place of spirits, still He was with His disciples in His Divine ubiquity.

II. Observe what was the nature of His presence in the Church after His resurrection. It was this, that He came and went as He pleased; that material substances, such as folded doors, were no impediments to His coming; and that when He was present His disciples did not, as a matter of course, know Him. For so it was ordained that Christ should not be both seen and known at once; first He was seen, then He was known. Only by faith is He known to be present; He is not recognised by sight. When He opened His disciples' eyes He at once vanished. He vanished from sight that He might be present in a sacrament; and in order to connect His visible presence with His presence invisible, He for one instant mani-

fested Himself to their open eyes—manifested Himself, if I may so speak, while He passed from His hiding-place of sight without knowledge, to that of knowledge without sight.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 120.

THE Light of Faith.

I. These words announce the departure of our Lord through the grave into the unseen world, when He passed among the long-imprisoned dead, "the spirits in prison," and unveiled His visible form, His soul, to the longing eyes of the saints of the earlier covenant, and, overthrowing the powers of hell, delivered the thralls of ages, opening to their gaze the inner realms of light, and the vision of God which His passion had obtained for redeemed man. The interval between His death and His resurrection was the "little while" during which He was no longer seen by the disciples on earth; and His return from the grave and His lingering among them before He ascended was the "little while" during which they again saw Him.

II. We may understand these words to represent one important feature of the spiritual life which characterises all the people of God in their earthly state. This not seeing Him for a little while, and again for a little while seeing Him, this alternative of brightness and darkness, is what our experience shows us to be the appointed condition of the faithful throughout the time of their probation. The loss of the sensible presence of Christ is, as even our natural reason may discern, necessary for the exercise of this discipline. An unchanging vision, palpable to the sense, would have been as incompatible with this economy of trial as the complete hiding of His countenance from the forsaken soul. In the one case it would have been all rapture, in the other all despair. What is needed is the vision of faith, which is a seeing and yet not seeing—a seeing neither clearly nor darkly, but an inexpressible intermingling of experiences, which are neither fulness of sight, nor yet blindness. And this wonderful discipline of the soul began in earnest, as the law of our regeneration, when our Lord withdrew Himself into His ascended glory, and the invisible and incomprehensible Spirit came forth to be the second Comforter. "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." But it is only because we cannot yet see Thee and live that Thou shinest upon us with tempered ray suited to our weakness; but our dim eyes strain after Thee, and seek to discern Thee more and more, not merely in the

special means and pledges of Thy presence, but even in all these outer forms, these visible works of Thy hands.

T. T. CARTER, *Sermons*, p. 183.

REFERENCES: xvi. 16.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 359; C. Kingsley, *All Saints' Day*, p. 109; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 137. xvi. 16-21.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 302. xvi. 16-22.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 195. xvi. 16-33.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 442. xvi. 19.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 414. xvi. 20.—T. J. Rowsell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii, p. 248; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 335. xvi. 20-22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1442. xvi. 21.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. ii., p. 29. xvi. 21, 22.—D. Fraser, *Metaphors of the Gospels*, p. 360.

Chap. xvi., ver. 22.—"And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

I. "YE now therefore have sorrow." Sorrow (1) because He was going away; sorrow (2) because of the declared manner of His death. If He had been about to die the common death of all men; if, young though He were, He was to be deprived of the residue of His years by pining sickness; if they could have stood by His bed and watched Him as the fastenings of the earthly tabernacle gave way, this might have lightened that great sorrow. But how different Christ's death was to be. (3) Selfishness entered very largely into the sorrow of the disciples. It is to be confessed that they had been disappointed. The service of Christ had not proved to be what they looked for, and the longer they continued in it the more discouraging their prospects became. "Ye now therefore have sorrow."

II. How beautiful is the law of our mental constitution which makes joy such an overruling, absorbing, past-obliterating thing. So soon as it comes, the preceding suffering becomes expunged, erased from thought, blotted out as a thing which had never been. That dark crucifixion scene, they remembered it no more; that dreadful, distressing sacrifice, they remembered it no more; that burying of their last hope in the garden, they remembered it no more, for joy that Christ had come to them again; and this is the Easter aspect of our subject: "I will see you again." Rejoice (1) to see how kindly He had remembered them, how promptly He had come to them, and how affectionately He had met them again, for the first time, without a word, or look, or gesture that had not love in it. (2) Rejoice,

because that in His return from the winepress gloriously apparelled, travelling in the greatness of His strength, they saw proof that their Master had triumphed after all; that all the powers of darkness had been baffled and defeated, and that the shield of omnipotence had been thrown over innocence and truth and right. (3) Rejoice, because in their Master's coming to them again there was an end put to all their dejection, distress, and fear. (4) Rejoice, because they saw in the resurrection the seal of their and our immortality; they understood the force and reality of those many expressions of the Saviour in which He had affirmed His dominion over the issues of life and death; and they would perhaps begin to comprehend for the first time the meaning of that He had said to them, "Because I live ye shall live also."

D. MOORE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3320.

REFERENCES: xvi. 22.—H. le Pla, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 139; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, pp. 345, 355. xvi. 23.—E. Bickersteth, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 5; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 247; J. Keble, *Ibid.*, p. 445; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 105; vol. v., p. 289; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 244; S. Martin, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 96. xvi. 23, 26.—A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, p. 190. xvi. 23-29. —*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 93; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 227. xvi. 23-30.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 68. xvi. 23-33.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 264; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 197. xvi. 24.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 436; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 92; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 287. xvi. 25.—*Ibid.*, p. 282; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 85. xvi. 26.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 268.

Chap. xvi., vers. 26, 27.—"I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you," etc.

THE Intercession of Christ.

I. While Christ's advocacy for us is a valuable part of His mediation and a comfort to timid petitioners, there is no doubt that it is very much exposed to serious and perilous misconception. Nothing is more easy than to push an analogy, drawn from human life, beyond that point at which it ceases to apply to the Divine. There is a false idea, according to which Jesus becomes the influential Patron to whose voice, pleading for His unfortunate clients, the ear of the Eternal is open, because He is the Father's Beloved and Jehovah's Fellow. The worst result

of this perversion of the doctrine is that it splits the Divine character in two, and apportions its features between the First and Second of the blessed Persons. For the tendency of such a representation is to gather into the remoter Father, at whose judgment seat Jesus pleads, all the sterner attributes of anger, rigorous justice, and hardness to be won; while Jesus Christ becomes the peacable and gentle Friend, full of pity for our case, on whose good offices with His Father we have to build our hope.

II. How are we to represent to ourselves the intercession of Christ, while guarding with jealousy like Christ's own the spontaneous love of the Father? The Scriptural representation of Christ as an intercessor strengthens the faith of penitents, by holding before their mind the ceaseless virtue of His atonement as the sole ground of their acceptance. The Father has assuredly no need to be either prompted, or coaxed, or entreated to extend that mercy which it is the joy and glory of His Fatherhood to extend to every penitent. But we have need to be encouraged to trust in His mercy. Evermore, therefore, is that Man who bore our sins to be thought of as the right hand of advocacy. Beside the Father "of an infinite majesty," as well as infinite love, there is One above whose love is not more, but whose majesty is less. He lies closer in to a man than any one who is not a man can do. Let Him search us, and when by the mysterious link of human brotherhood He has thus known us in our adversity, let Him tell to the Father what we cannot tell. Let Him justify us, if He can, or confess for us, or pray in our name, as to His supreme gentleness shall seem meet; and it shall be well.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *Sermons*, p. 176.

Chap. xvi., vers. 26-32.

LOVE the Evidence of Faith.

I. Our Lord here speaks of His disciples' belief in Him as one of the reasons why the Father loved them. But He puts it second. He puts their belief after their love. This is the true and only sure order of the growth of faith in the soul. It begins with love. That which leads a man to the belief in Christ, that which supplies, as it were, the root of his faith, is love. Faith is worth little, can stand little temptation, unless it is rooted in love. The true Christian finds in the character of the Lord that which his heart can love, and because of that he believes. Faith rests on the correspondence between the revelation of God

and the soul of man. And the beginning of this correspondence is the love of the heavenly.

II. Nothing is more common than the fancy which leads men to rest their faith on some striking event, on some remarkable experience, or fulfilment, or apparent fulfilment, of prophecy. Nor is there anything wrong in allowing such arguments to strike our minds, provided we recognise how poor and shallow is the faith which rests on any such foundation. Let these things help us if they can, but let us know, too, that if we rely on them, and fancy that the truth of God can be proved by such arguments as these, we should be making the same mistake as the disciples just before our Lord's arrest. The faith which rests on what is outside is at the mercy of what is outside.

III. The man, whether young or old, who is storing up in his soul a real love of what is good, is building within him a sure faith. He may have to change some of his opinions; he may have to give up some that he has cherished much. He may find that arguments that seemed to him weighty are worth nothing. He may at times be sorely tried, and perhaps his faith may even fail, as the faith of the Apostles failed when they saw their Master led off unresistingly to prison. But his faith has a real root, a root deep in the very inmost soul. And he shall not be taken away from God, nor lose his hold on God's truth. He may wander, but he will return; for God's finger has touched him.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 107.

Chap. xvi., ver. 28.—**"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."**

THE Earthly Life of Jesus.

Full and momentous as our Lord's life was—infinitely beyond the life of other men—if He could say of it, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father"—if He could put that life into such a parenthesis, and so bracket it between two eternities, what must our sojourn on this earth be? What an insignificant interval! Then, what is life worth but in its bearings on eternity? The life which Christ thus lived, from the Father and for the Father, seen now in a calm retrospect had most strange proportions. He lived thirty-three years—a little life for such a man and to do such a work. And yet, of those thirty-three years, thirty were almost out of sight, spent apparently in preparation.

Observe it well: thirty years preparing for three years' working —ten-elevenths of life passed to lay a foundation. What a contrast to ourselves! What a lesson; what a special lesson, to an impatient, superficial, showy, rushing generation! Now, let us look at one or two of the features of this wonderfully proportioned life.

I. It was certainly a progressive life. It was a life which passed (and is not this growth?) from the active to the passive —from the obedience that did to the obedience that bore.

II. And this was singularly a life which showed always the work He had in hand. Everything had its rule, everything had its measure, everything had its principle.

III. He came to receive. It was scarcely more a life of imparting than it was a life of receiving. He was always depending upon some loving follower for the supply of every want He ever had. There is a very high order of greatness in that acceptance of compassion. It was a part of the grandeur of His humility.

IV. And along, from Bethlehem to Bethany, it was a mystic life. There was more than met the common eye. In that life thousands and tens of thousands were living; in that death thousands and tens of thousands were dying. It was always a representative life. All His Church went down with Him to His burial; they rose with Him in the unity of their perfect membership, on the resurrection morning; and in His ascension they all soared with Him to the higher level of a glorified life.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 211.

REFERENCES: xvi. 28.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 17; W. Dorling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 356. xvi. 31.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 12; *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 304.

Chap. xvi., vers. 31, 32.—**"Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone," etc.**

THE Work of the Comforter.

I. Many, perhaps, cannot understand how the condition of Christians now is better than that of the disciples when our Lord was upon earth; how the Comforter, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, can be a greater blessing than the visible presence of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Yet if we look at the character of the apostles, we shall see that our Lord's words were exactly true. It was expedient for them that He should go away, because

while He was with them their faith often wavered, and their hearts were more often turned to earthly things than to heavenly; but when He went from them, and the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, visited them in His room, they were led into all truth and their whole minds were renewed by that spiritual baptism, so as to be fit for the kingdom of God. That Comforter is now ever working in the hearts of Christ's true servants, and therefore to them, as was promised, Christ still manifests Himself. Though now they see Him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; a far happier state than theirs who saw Him and yet did not believe in Him.

II. To feel the burden of our captivity is not the same thing as to be free from it; to love God in our better mind, or, as St. Paul calls it, "according to the inward man," is not the same thing as to walk according to that love and show it forth in our lives and actions. So that though we may now believe, yet if the hour cometh when we shall be scattered every man to his own, assuredly we cannot reckon ourselves as belonging to that flock of the good Shepherd, who hear His voice, and also follow Him whithersoever He goeth, so that they may never go astray from the fold. We must attain to the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus; the Spirit of God must abide in us and change us into His own image, that we may be delivered from sin and the flesh, and serve them no more at all.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 246.

REFERENCES: xvi. 31-33.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 171.

Chap. xvi., ver. 32.

LONELINESS.

I. There is a loneliness inseparable from the spiritual life. To cherish such loves and hopes of heaven, such desires for God's honour, such delight in Jesus' grace, as you dare not drag from the sacred silence of the heart, is not that the burden of all the saints? "Yet not alone." Let it console us under our hidden hopes and fears, under weariness of sin, and under unappreciated efforts to do good, to remember not only that Christ felt it all, but that in the midst of it all He drew into His bosom the sweet companionship of a heavenly confidant and Father. To us, as to Him, shall the sense of such society prove balm to our pain and solace in our loneliness.

II. A special variety of spiritual solitude arises when a

Christian is called to endure temptation. In such assaults a Christian can expect little aid and hardly any companionship from man. But it is when no man stands by us that our Joseph discovers himself to His brethren, and the presence of Jehovah is a secret place.

III. There is a loneliness in sorrow. Deep grief loves silence and retirement. When a man would weep, he goes apart to do it. Where is the mourner who has not experienced the two-fold desire—desire for a solitude within, that is felt to be indispensable; desire for fellowship within reach, as near at hand as may be, about a stone's cast off. He who could face His trial with the assurance that One above would never leave Him entirely alone, knows how to save you by the angel of His presence.

IV. Exactly in proportion to the preciousness of the Divine presence is the unspeakable solitude of the Divine absence. Yet, has the forlorn soul, under such loneliness of desertion, any right to say that it is passed beyond the fellow-feeling of the Son of God? Out into an absolute loneliness of outer darkness He peered; He crossed the line; He lost the consciousness of that Presence, and felt Himself for the first time alone indeed, bereft of that secret inward instinct whose conscious sympathy had sustained Him in every earlier solitude. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If He too went through such an awful experience, must He not be drawn to watch you in it with the interest of fellow-feeling?

J. OSWALD DYKES, *Sermons*, p. 326.

REFERENCES: xvi. 32.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 363; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 81; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 367; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 9; E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 299; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 253.

Chap. xvi., ver. 33.—"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

THERE is a difficulty in seizing the precise meaning of the word "world." It seems an airy, subtle, impalpable thing, that world of St. John. It refuses to be described, to be precipitated, to be measured, to be defined. It is not the wicked, though they are its victims. It is not Satan, though the Scriptures call him its prince, as presiding over it and rejoicing in it. It is an atmosphere, a temper, a spirit, a power real and most energetic, but dread and invisible. It has hung for ages—this world—like a dark murky cloud over the heart of humanity.

It poisons the very air we breathe. It is that warp in the aim and affections of the soul which makes of each of the objects of this visible creation, and of the circumstances of life, a distinct hindrance to getting to heaven. Let us note the character of its influence.

I. First of all, it works secretly and without being suspected. Observe the language which we use with regard to it in daily life. When we speak of the world, we uniformly assume that it is something outside us. The world disguises itself; it is like Satan showing himself in the character of an angel of light; it seeks to be habitually respectable, it dislikes gross sin, it affects very particularly to cultivate the social virtues. It can be prudent, like the old prophet; it can be wise, like Ahithophel; it can be courageous as was Saul; it can be very pious indeed, like the false apostles of the Church of Corinth.

II. The world has a marvellous versatility, a power of self-adaptation to all ages and races and classes. There may be a difference of form; there is a marvellous and awful unity of spirit. The spirit of the world is contagious; it passes, like an infection, from soul to soul.

III. What was the relation of our Lord to the Jewish world in His day and generation? It could not receive His spirit; it rejoiced at His departure. It rested not, that world, till it had led Him to the Cross. And, therefore, His resurrection was not merely a conquest of death, not merely the crowning proof of His Divinity; it was a triumph over the power that had killed Him. It was the conquest of the world. "Be of good cheer," He said, in full view of His Easter triumph; "I have overcome the world."

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3847.

THE Mystery of Peace.

I. The mystery of peace, for the disciples, as for us, could be clearly shown by teaching two truths. (1) First, the Lord brought out to them, as seen in the fact of His conflict, the meaning of the outer life of the Christian. That outer life, so it appeared, was to take its meaning and derive its trial from antagonism with one overwhelming power. In the world ye shall have tribulation. There lay before the Christian, if he had strength to be a Christian, a long and necessary course of trial. (2) But the tribulation is turned to excellent uses. Trial is the school of obedience; trial is the means of growth of character; trial is the method of discipline; trial is the

training of faith. There is this sad fact of the outer life of the Christian; but the silence of the winter world witnesses to the coming life of spring; the narrow wrapping of the narrow bud witnesses to the opening flower; the dark night witnesses to the morning; the outer struggle of the Christian witnesses to the inner life.

II. Examine some of the conditions of the mystery of peace. (1) First, we plainly need the forgiveness of sin. Resistance; the onward march of a struggling soul; the yearning towards, the crying for, the seeking after forgiveness; these are needed; then—for Christ is unfailing in His promise—it is the peace, the real rest of the weary, not the stillness and lethargy of decay. (2) "First the kingdom of God and His righteousness" is a condition of peace. When the soul is learning to act in this life on the principles of another—to live, to move, to work, in fact, "in Christ"—then, like the consistent calmness of the sunlight on the quiet summer day, then, like the majesty of stillness in the unfathomed azure of the summer night—then, there is peace. (3) As a condition of peace we must surrender an attractive principle and adopt one at least apparently severe. To have this treasure of peace, so fair, so needed, we must be freed from a tyrannous and trembling anxiety to please ourselves.

III. We are led to peace (1) by Christ's example; (2) by faith in His blood; (3) by growth in grace.

W. J. KNOX-LITTLE, *The Mystery of the Passion*, p. 137.

Chap. xvi., ver. 33.—"These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace," etc.

THERE is clearly a negative rolled up in this sentence. It is this: that there is no peace out of Christ.

I. Let us be careful that we understand what the peace of God is. It is the feeling of being forgiven—a quiet conscience—a stilling sense of the love of God. That is the first thing. Then, growing out of that, it is a certain contemplative habit of mind that deals silently with unseen things, which lives up high enough not to be tossed and anxious much about the matters which concern the present world. For it is the repose of faith, a trust in promises, a sense of a Father's love, a Father's nearness, a Father's care—the hush of a little child leaning on His bosom.

II. It is of immense importance to have that peace, because

(1) first, it is the sweetest and the best and the only satisfying of all possessions. It meets the deepest longings of a man's heart. Pleasure is man's delight, but peace is man's necessity. No man is complete till he has peace. No man knows what he can be—the capabilities of his own nature, or what enjoyment is—till he is at peace. (2) Peace is the root of all holiness. To believe that you are pardoned, to be at leisure from the retrospect, to carry a conscience at ease, to take the unruffled reflection of Christ, even as Christ did of the Father—that is the atmosphere of a daily religious life, and that is the secret of every good thing. (3) Peace is the fulfilment of the work of Christ. Then the eloquence of the Cross has not been in vain. Then His word has accomplished its grand design. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace."

III. Three rules for peace. (1) Be more decided. Decision is the parent of peace. Take some steps at once heavenward, and it may be that one step will land you in peace. (2) Confess Christ; confess Him in the world; do not be ashamed of your better portion; begin to speak of Christ to somebody. (3) And lastly, go up and down more in Christ—His work, His person, His beauty, His grace. Listen for His still small voice. He will speak. You will hear Him, and you will feel Him—a strange grand reality—a thing that comes and does not go away again, like everything else—peace.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1868, p. 37.

IN the world ye have tribulation! Such is our cry when we think of the thousand pains and miseries which we have endured in the year that is gone, when we remember the labour and trouble that we have passed through, eating our bread in the sweat of our brow, sighing under the burden and heat of the day. These are but our own troubles, and life would be an easy thing if each had only his own burden to bear, if the manifold grief of others did not also lie heavy on our hearts.

I. What was the tribulation of which the Lord speaks in the words of our text? A new Divine life had sprung up for the disciples in their Redeemer—a life which the world neither possessed nor understood. They were to bring that life to the world. And the world was hostile to them; not only was it unwilling to receive the life of God, but it would not even listen to the story of that life; it had no heart for the love which God had shown it, no eye for the truth of grace which

shone in upon its darkness. So the disciples had tribulation in the world; and their tribulation is ours also. We feel that this is a world of sin. We know the terrible power with which sin rules in the world at large, and in the little world which each man carries within him.

II. "Be of good cheer," says the Lord; "I have overcome the world." He who speaks thus was no idle spectator of our sorrows, but One who Himself fought a battle such as none ever fought before or since. At the very moment when His fiercest conflict was about to begin, He calls to us in these words from the clear joyous heights in which His being had its home. And was not the battle He fought the fiercest ever engaged in? He bore Himself in the contest as no warrior ever did before. There was not one moment of defeat during all that conflict. He was victor from first to last. The fiercer the battle, the more glorious was His victory. And the glorified Victor calls now to us: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." For him who follows, the world is overcome already. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. R. ROTHE, *Predigten*, p. 70.

THE Duty of the Church to the World.

I. The world is nothing less than this—any one of God's works enjoyed or possessed without God, be it what it may—the world contemplated without that counterpoise in the other world that exists, and was meant to exist, to prevent us from being slaves of this. Without this love of God which lifts a man above this present world, he must, whether pagan or Christian, become necessarily the slave of the world, the subject of its rule, the very servant of its whims and its caprices. He becomes a very man of the world in the very lowest and poorest sense of the word—not daring to be his own master, but the very servant, not even of the world in its largest and best sense, but of that little fragment of the world and of society to which he appears to belong.

II. We live, every one of us, or we are in danger of living, in the most abject slavery to the world to which we belong. And what will set us free? The truth, and the truth alone, makes man free—the truth that teaches each one of us that we are redeemed and immortal spirits, telling us that we belong not to ourselves nor yet to our party, nor yet to our world, but to the God in heaven Who made us and will judge us, and has redeemed us. This alone gives a man the courage that comes

forth from the very depths of self-sacrifice and humiliation before his Lord and Master, to rise up, and in His name, in the name of His law and in the power of His might, to defy the smaller laws—to break through the stringent customs, to brave the hostile opinions of the world in which he lives. And the man who cannot do this is not yet made free with the glorious liberty of a son of God. He is overcome by the world; he has not yet learned to overcome the world.

III. It is not, and never was, the duty of the Church to conform herself to the spirit of the age. It is the duty of the Church to instruct the age, to love the age, and if need be to rebuke the age, but never yet in its whole history has it been her duty to conform to the spirit of the age. And yet, on the other hand, how deeply and intensely it is the duty of the Church to understand and sympathise with her age—to be in very deed a dweller amongst men. She is to go forth wherever men are, and, in the name of her Divine Master, who died to redeem humanity, whatever men are doing and thinking, she is to say with an infinitely deeper meaning than it had on the lips of Him who first said it: "We are human, and there is nothing in or of our age that we can count estranged from us." The Church is to be of her day, and yet of all days and of all ages; having truths deeper, and facts greater, and laws and powers mightier to speak of and to reveal, than even the facts and the truths and the laws which science is revealing to us now. In this way only can the Church hope to overcome the world.

BISHOP MAGEE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 579.

REFERENCES: xvi. 33.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1327; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 124; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 304; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 278; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 361; J. Aldis, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xi., p. 129; J. H. Hitchens, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 203; E. Johnson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 137; *New Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 67; W. M. Taylor, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 97. xvii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1464; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 363; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, vol. ii., p. 588; F. D. Maurice, *Gospel of St. John*, p. 411; J. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 230; W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 168; C. Stanford, *Evening of Our Lord's Ministry*, pp. 151, 157; C. Kingsley, *Good News of God*, p. 12; *Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 382. xvii. 1, 2.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 72; vol. ix., p. 137.

Chap. xvii., ver. 2.—**"As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."**

I. PERHAPS the first thought which arrests the mind in this

wide-circling verse is the connection of power and mercy—power all subordinate to mercy. Three gifts, you will observe—three gifts are separately mentioned, and these three gifts comprise everything. The whole truth, as it is in Jesus, is wrapt up in these three gifts. God gives Christ a people. Over that people, when He had died for them, God gives Christ authority,—for that is the meaning of the word "power:" authority, prerogative, rule. And Christ, using the power, gives to them eternal life.

II. It is just what we want—a force superior to the grossnesses of nature—an authority which asserts itself over the material—something that can elevate what we call the baser to something which seems to us to be, and which perhaps is, the higher part of our being. We want it daily in ourselves—we want it in those we love—we want it in the thickness and oppressiveness of a burdened life—we want it in all the great things of life—we want it in the Judgment Day—we want it in the new heavens and the new earth—we want it and we have it. "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh."

III. What is eternal life? (1) It is a thing present. Never think of eternal life as a thing beginning the other side of the grave. It begins now, or not at all. (2) To know God is eternal life. But remember it is no knowledge of God or of Christ to know them intellectually—to know them abstractly. You must know them personally. You must not know of them as you read in a book, as you know persons in history; but you must know them as you know one with whom you are intimate, whose mind you have read; in whose smile you have sunned yourself; in whose heart you are; with whom you have held sweet converse. That is life here—that is life for ever and ever.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 314.

REFERENCES: xvii. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 566; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvii., p. 122; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 314. xvii. 1-8.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 277. xvii. 1-7.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 265. xvii. 3.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 310; S. Baring Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 43; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 17; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 5; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 33.

Chap. xvii., ver. 4.—"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

I DO not think that here in this text our Lord intended to refer to the final and completing act—the blood-shedding which was

remission. I believe He reviewed His life—the subjection, the pain, the obedience learned by the things He suffered, the teaching and the trial, the subjection to indignities, to time and space, to cold and hunger, to devils and to men—in the light of all these visionary recollections, He said: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." This saying of our Lord—it is a very arrow of light gleaming across the burdened valley of our being—"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." In this speciality, which was the Saviour's triumph, lies the ground also of the Christian's consolation—speciality, I say, for God sets the work, God hems the work around with difficulties. We succeed, it is because He has aided us; we fail, it is because He would teach us; and thus often failure becomes the footstool of the highest success. It is an illustrious thought, and it is the bright, red light along the horizon of life, that every one has his appointed field. "Thou shalt choose our inheritance for us."

I. Sorrow is work. Was not His sorrow work? Sorrow is the rain which descends down to the very roots of our being. Sorrow has an influence on the heart like that of the atmospheric action on the hard rocks and hills: it loosens, it softens, it disintegrates, it levels, and from the mould it makes the flowers and the fruits of the heart, as the flowers and fruits of earth spread their bloom.

II. Temptation is work. Man does not see the victory or the triumph; but God does.

III. Faith is work. But this is our work in relation to God, and sympathy is work—our work in relation to man.

Think how Divine is work—in its lowest as well as in its highest form—to make something. Not one is forgotten before God. The fisherman going forth to the rivers, the ploughboy to the fields, the dairyman to the farmyard, the artisan to the shop, much-enduring man to toil. How Divine, how godlike is work—to draw the silken thread of Spirit through the hard needle of difficulty.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Sermons*, p. 306.

Chap. xvii., ver. 4.—"I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

CONSIDER what were the purposes of God which by the death of our Lord were answered, and which without it, as far as we can see, could not have been answered so that God was thereby glorified.

I. And first, I think, we must feel that hereby a mark was set upon the devil's work, sin, which no other conceivable procedure could have set upon it. Its hatefulness to God; its exceeding atrocity; the fearfulness of being tempted to commit it; was hereby made intelligible to all—that nothing less than this agonising torture inflicted on the Son of God could expiate it.

II. The next important purpose answered by the sufferings of our blessed Master, and the manifest carrying out of God's will thereby, is their eminent adaptation to establish a spiritual kingdom as wholly distinct from a carnal one. His kingdom was manifestly not of this world. Pilate marvelled that it could be called a kingdom at all, not comprehending the power of holy example, of hearty doctrine, of humble patience. Yet herein was our Father glorified, and hereby were won such glorious triumphs as worldly policy, or force of arms, or outward wealth and influence could never have achieved. For these do but for a while affect the present interests of mankind; whereas the patient endurance, the cheerful alacrity of our blessed Lord unto every good work, His humility, His meekness, His constancy, His love, His gentleness, His unexampled self-denial on all occasions, have left behind them solid and everlasting memorials—have in all ages of the world been the stay of sufferers, the comfort of mourners, the strength of them that wrestled with temptation, the hope of downcast, afflicted souls; and not only so, but have sanctified all the instrumentalities wherewith the purposes of this world are carried out.

III. Consider how entirely Christ, by His life and death, has shut out all shams and pretences to religion,—has made it impossible for insincerity and worldliness to indulge in the flattering hope of entering in through the door whose posts and lintels are all sprinkled with blood. What is this blood, and what does it signify? It is the blood of the Lamb that was slain, of the only begotten Son of God, Who gave His life for our lives, due to God for sin.

BISHOP THOROLD, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 410, new series.

As regards the finished work of Christ, our duty is (1) to understand, value, believe and appropriate it; (2) to cultivate and carry to the highest degree possible an inner life of pious thoughts and feelings in communion with God, and an outer life of holiness, whereby we shall gradually grow meet for the eternal presence, and services and enjoyments of Almighty God;

and (3) we have to do such good works here, as God hath before ordained that we should walk in them for the good of our fellow creatures and the extension of the kingdom of Christ. It is the third work which I now desire to consider.

I. The worst of all possible conditions is the state of those who live without the testimony of their own conscience that they have some work that they are doing for God. And yet, it is the position of thousands. They live, in this sense at least, a pointless and an aimless life, and they incur the retributive consequence—they pass a restless, because a Christless; and a joyless, because a useless existence. Life has never been traced up to its true bearing, and therefore, the character is weak, the energies are loose and the happiness vapid. And very solemn at last will be the evening, when the Lord of the vineyard meets these workless ones.

II. We lay it down first, that every one's natural position, his providential circumstances, his work or business, or profession, which he has chosen, determines his chief work in life which, taken from God, he is to execute for God. There is many a man and many a woman whose work through life is to glorify God in some quiet home scene, in the daily Christian performance of unnoticed duties, and the unworldly discharge of some worldly service,—only let each accept it as from heaven, and be careful to throw heaven into it. Then, it is a training and a discipline for the higher services of another world. But whether you find it in your place in the family, in your business in the world, or whether it lie in something that you have undertaken more expressly for the cause of religion and for God, only look well to this, that it be real work—that you distinctly feel you have a mission to it—that it is a work given to you, and that it be done piously for God, in God, to God. "I have finished *the* work which Thou gavest *Me* to do."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 149.

REFERENCES: xvii. 4, *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 933. xvii. 4, 5.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 82. xvii. 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 267. xvii. 8-11.—W. Roberts, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 357. xvii. 11.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 14th series, p. 76. xvii. 11, 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1883.

Chap. xvii., ver. 11.—"Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are."

I. THE Author and maintainer of Unity. "Holy Father, keep." Unity wherever it exists flows from God. He is the cloud

whence the drops of peace distil first upon crowning Hermon, and then flow down to all the lower heights. And as He is the exclusive author, so is He also the exclusive maintainer of unity. Peace and unity in families—unity, peace and concord among nations—harmony between contending parties, whether in the state or in the church—all these are the result of that maintenance and support which God as the Eternal Father is continually ministering to His creatures, and accordingly must be traced to Him as their origin.

II. Note the method by which God maintains this unity through His own Name. It is an unfeigned acknowledgment of Divine love on one hand, and Divine justice on the other, in which our Saviour here prays that God would keep His chosen. Keep their hearts ever alive to all the attributes which constitute Thy Name or character. Proclaim Thou Thy name before them, and give them to walk conformably to it, yielding Thee an obedience, strict indeed, as with One who will not suffer sin upon them; but at the same time free and princely, and hearty and loving—the obedience not of slaves, but of dear children.

III. Note the persons between whom this unity may be expected to subsist: "Those whom Thou hast given Me." Union, real vital union, cannot exist among and with those who are ignorant of God.

IV. How close will be the bond of the fellowship; that "They may be one, *as We are.*" What mortal shall tell, what mortal shall comprehend the exceeding closeness of that unity, perfect unity of counsels—perfect unity of will—perfect unity of ends—perfect unity of nature? And even such a bond shall clasp the elect together, nay is now clasping them, and being gradually drawn more closely around them.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Sermons at Holywell*, p. 182.

REFERENCES: xvii. 11.—*New Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 72; G. W. McCree, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 46; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension to Trinity*, p. 21; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 241.

Chap. xvii., ver. 12.—**"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition," etc.**

CHRIST'S Care for His Disciples.

I. Observe, first, what a comforting thing it is to know that Christ would sooner work a miracle to restrain the enemies of His servants, than leave those servants to an encounter too

great for their strength. The disciples, we may believe, would have been sure to fall away, had the band which seized Christ laid hands also on them; they had not yet received grace sufficient for the trial, therefore were they miraculously delivered. Apostasy would have been inevitable, and thus God never suffers it to be. But we dare not say that afterwards, when they had received grace sufficient for the trial, apostasy became impossible. It was no longer true that they must fall, through not having strength enough; it was still true that they might fall, through not using strength aright.

II. In place of procuring His followers an opportunity for escape, might not Christ have imparted an ability to endure? Though God could have given to the disciples grace adequate to martyrdom, he could not have given it consistently with the laws which prescribe His dealings with accountable creatures. It would have taken more grace than could be bestowed without destroying all freedom of will. Remember that grace is that in which you are bidden to grow; and in spiritual stature no more than in bodily is the infant made the giant with no stage between. The spiritual temple rises stone by stone, as beneath the hands of a builder; it does not soar at once, wall—dome—pinnacle—complete, as beneath the wand of an enchanter.

III. Christ's promises and purposes in regard of His people are large and comprehensive. In covenanting to give us eternal life, Christ hath also covenanted to put His shield round us, that we may be kept from all the power of the enemy. The saving of the disciples from bodily danger might be taken as an assurance that Christ would not fail to conduct them safely to His heavenly kingdom; and therefore was it a sort of primary accomplishment of the gracious purpose that none of them should be lost. What a brightness would it shed over present deliverances, what a sweetness would it give to present mercies, were all in the habit of regarding them as so many earnests of a rich inheritance above!

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1875 (see also *Voices of the Year*, vol. ii., p. 195).

REFERENCES: xvii. 12.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 1st series, pp. 331, 348. xvii. 12-19.—T. Birkett Dover, *The Ministry of Mercy*, p. 141.

Chap. xvii., ver. 15.—"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

THERE are two reasons why God does not take His people out of the world, but rather keeps them in it and preserves them

from the evil. One reason respects themselves—the other, the world.

I. And first, it is for a good and salutary work on themselves that they are thus brought into contact with temptation, and face to face with evil. None really stands firm but he who has assured his footing. A man may seem to stand, may think he stands, but it may be only because he has never been assailed. His position may be erect, his attitude apparently safe; but the first shock shall dislodge him, because he has never learned how to withstand it; on which side, and how with best effect, resistance may be offered. We are made perfect by trials and conflicts; they are to us as the winds of heaven are to the tree, trying its root—exercising its weak parts one after another, that they may be excited to growth and strength. Our heavenly Father does not take us out of the world, but keeps us in it, within reach of all its allurements and vanities and ungodliness, that we may grow up, by combating and resisting these, into a perfect man in Christ, armed at all points against enemies whom we well know, and with whom we have contested every foot of the ground and painfully won it for Him.

II. If all God's people were to seclude themselves and fly from temptation, where would be the work of the Church on earth? where our Lord's last command, Go ye into all the world and evangelise every creature? The kingdom of heaven is as leaven. Where does leaven work? From without? No—but from within. And if the leaven is kept out of the lump, how shall the lump become leavened? We must not take ourselves out of the world; for the world's sake, if not for our own. Christ's work is often done, and done most effectually by those who range apparently at a distance from the direct subject itself; who by the influence of ordinary conversation, in which Christian principles are asserted and upheld, impress and attract others, without the use of words to them unusual and repulsive. It is to multitudinous droppings of such unseen and gracious influences, rather than to any great flood of power, in books or in ministers, that we must look for the Christianising of society here and through the civilised world.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 109.

MUCH of our modern religious teaching favours withdrawal from the world, and even encourages the wish for an early death. In many of our popular hymns the ruling thought is safety in the arms of Jesus, rest in Paradise. Nothing is said of labour,

which they must undergo who claim rest; nothing of that conflict with the world, which alone makes it a place of probation. It needs little argument to prove which is the more correct—to pray to live, or to pray to die. When Moses, Elijah and Jonah requested for themselves to die, they erred; and if it still be a doubtful point, Christ's prayer that the apostles should be kept in the world for its good and His glory, that they should mix in its society, and yet be free from its contamination through the sanctification of His Spirit, is conclusive, as it agrees with the feelings of nature and the dictates of reason. It being then a necessity, as well as part of our religion, to be in the world, a right adjustment of claims has to be made between the extremes of overmuch fondness for it, and entire neglect of it.

I. The first principle of safety I would lay down is the recognition that the world—for which I might read polite society—is still full of danger for those who devote themselves to it in earnest. Though we soften the Bible sentences, and allow for a gradual leavening of modern society by the Gospel, yet its tone is distinctly irreligious, and quite removed from the New Testament ideal. God is not in all its thoughts. Christ is not the object of its faith or its love. The Holy Spirit does not dictate its conversation or moderate its fashions. And yet this is the world, though so manifestly in opposition to God, that we court.

II. You are not doing enough for Christ, if merely you shun the world; rather you must go into it, pass as one of it—for the Lord knoweth them that are His—possibly be much occupied with it, yet without imbibing its spirit. It will come to be attractive to you in a sense that you would not expect until you approached it with the deeper insight into Christ's purposes concerning it; for it is His creation. He is the light of it, and you a light-bearer. He has loved it and redeemed it, to reconsecrate it to Himself; and you, who know it, are to proclaim that love is the ministry of reconciliation. As Christ came not to condemn the world, but to save the world; so you must not scold it or judge it, but do what you can to improve it.

C. E. SEARLE, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, May 13th, 1880.

NOTE—

I. What our Lord asks for His followers. To be kept from evil in the world means (1) to be engaged in the world's business and have it rightly directed; (2) to suffer under its trials and be preserved from impatience; (3) to be exposed to its temptations and preserved from falling into sin.

II. Why our Lord asks for His friends that they should not be taken out of the world. He asks it (1) for the benefit of the world; (2) for the good of Christians themselves; (3) for the honour of His own name.

REFERENCES: xvii. 14, 15; *Good Words*, vol. iii., p. 317. xvii. 15.—J. Vaughan, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 401; *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 73; E. D. Solomon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 164; J. G. Rogers, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 104; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 47; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 123; J. N. Norton, *Every Sunday*, p. 274; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 216; H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 155; J. M. Neale, *Sermons to Children*, p. 21. xvii. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 78; J. Miller, *Pulpit Analyst*, vol. ii., p. 481; T. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, p. 295; *Good News*, vol. iii., p. 379; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 90.

Chap. xvii., vers. 16, 17.—"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," etc.

CHRISTIAN Separation from the World.

I. Its nature. The unworldliness of Christ is our model. The separating line which marked His life from the world's life is the line which is to mark our own. Christ's separation was not an outward separation from the world, but an inward separation from its spirit.

II. This spiritual atmosphere of separation, amid His close contact with men, arose (1) from His life of holy consecration; (2) from His life of abiding prayer.

III. Its purposes. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." Our mission of witnessing to the truth, love, will of God, can only be fulfilled by this spiritual separation from the world. Apart from this, everything else fails; it alone gives power to direct our Christian activity.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 191.

Chap. xvii., ver. 17.—"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth."

I. REVELATION, or, as our Lord terms it solemnly, the truth, sanctifies us first of all by putting before us an ideal of sanctity. The man of action, like the artist, needs an ideal. It is, in fact, his first necessity, and outside the sphere of revelation there have been such ideals; but they have been vague, indistinct, varying,—above all, they have been conspicuous by their failure, again and again, to satisfy the higher demands even of the

natural conscience. By giving the world, before the eyes of men, the record of one life spotless and consecrated, the truth does sanctify those who will submit themselves to its power. It affects thousands for good in degrees which fall far short of sanctification. It sanctifies those who desire to be made holy, and who, with their eyes fixed on this, the one typical form of excellence, ask earnestly for the Holy Spirit of God, whose work it is in the sacraments, and in other ways, to take of the things of Jesus and to show or to give them to His own.

II. The truth sanctifies, secondly, by stimulating hope. It gives every man who wills it not only an ideal, but a future. Be he what he may, or may not be, he may look forward. There is, he knows, another world, another life; and between this and that there are opportunities. Where there is no such hope, nothing visible to the eye of the soul beyond the horizon of time; where there is no future intimately related to this present life, or growing out of it—there sanctity, in its proper sense, is impossible. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." To live hereafter, to any purpose at all, is to live at the feet of One whose very name is an incentive to sanctification.

III. But Christian truth sanctifies also as being a revelation of the love of God. Love has a power of making men holy. There are moral conditions which defy fear, but which cannot defy love. "Sanctify" is the response which the heart makes to unmerited mercy. It is the generous response not to be at least untouched by love. If you would find the fructifying power which, in the successive generations of Christendom, has raised up men and women to lead supernatural lives—to live, as it were, in view of the other world, with marks of the character and teaching of St. Paul and of the Lord Jesus clearly stamped upon them—you will find it in the eternal truth, that the Son of God took flesh, and died out of love for fallen man, being so deeply graven on their hearts.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 528.

WE see here—

I. One cause of the hopeless degradation of the heathen world, even in its most refined and advanced state of mental culture. Truth was discussed in their schools of philosophy, but it was to them only a philosophy; it was not a life. It was to them a startling revelation to say, as the Gospel said, that truth was only truth to those who loved it, that the law of

restored humanity was that each advance in illumination should be an advance in spiritual purity.

II. Again, this same principle shows the fallacy of referring to Jewish customs and the standard of Jewish morality to justify lax lives in Christians. Jewish spirituality is no standard for Christian life, unless we can reduce the compass of Christian truth within the limits of Jewish truth.

III. Again, we here see the true nature and course of Christian revivals. As a general law, a revival of doctrine precedes a revival of life. Revivals which arise from truths which fasten themselves in the soul expand and grow with the truths themselves, and become, like them, abiding principles.

IV. It is needful that those who hold the truth should be warned of the dangers and deceits which, adhering to the fullest and most correct apprehension of doctrine, may yet make shipwreck of their faith. (1) It is clear that, as we receive any fresh truth, our first thought should be, "What does this involve? To what change, what progress in my life, does this naturally lead?" (2) Again, we here learn a rule for our devotions. If our devotions tend to earnest practical aspirations as their aim, they will act upon our lives; and the reverse is equally true. (3) A warning needs to be given to those who, by the grace of God, are drawn to an earnest self-devotion, after a sinful and careless life. The graces of a saintly character grow less quickly than the convictions of truth. It is not that sanctity is uncertain, or the results of the grace of God and His truth less real than our natural corruption, but that the noblest plants are of slowest growth, and the consequences of our fall remain to trouble us in the course of our repentance, as a penance ordained to be borne for a while. (4) Be diligent and watchful concerning the lesser facts of daily life, and not merely its greater trials. As "he that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little," so he alone that labours to conform himself to the will of God in the constant claims of everyday life shall rise by little and little to his consummation of bliss, in his predestined union with God.

T. T. CARTER, *Sermons*, p. 136.

REFERENCES: xvii. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1890; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 186; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 194; H. P. Liddon, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 97; E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 228. xvii. 17-19.—H. Mackennal, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 216. xvii. 18, 19.—S. Hebditch, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 317.

Chap. xvii., ver. 19.—**"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."**

SANCTIFICATION.

I. The sanctification of which our Lord speaks in this place, is the consecration of the whole creature, of the whole being, to the spiritual purpose of the service of our heavenly Father. To give up everything in order that His will may be accomplished, to do that will to the very full—this is the perfect sanctification of all things. And, of course, this sanctification, in itself, does not necessarily imply any change in the thing which is sanctified. If we think of things which stand at the lowest end, and of things which stand at the highest end of being, there is no change at all in the consecration of either to the fulfilment of the will of God. But when we think of all that stands between these, when we think of the consecration of a finite creature—or, still more, of a finite creature, intelligent and possessed of will, and yet the evil in that will—it is plain that the consecration, of necessity, must imply a real change in the thing that is consecrated. If there is evil, that evil cannot be dedicated to God; if there is anything which hinders the service of our Father, that hindrance must be taken away.

II. In all work that has to be done for the sake of God here among men, the same unchanging rule ever prevails; and the man who would undertake to do it, must himself begin in his own person that regeneration which he is desirous to produce in others, and must begin to sanctify himself. If he is to help others to sanctify themselves, if he is to be the source of any moral and spiritual growth, it must be because there is in him the same moral and spiritual growth, and he must derive it from the source of all moral and spiritual growth—the sanctification of the Lord Jesus Himself. It is only by beginning within, and by seeking to be what He was, that it is possible for us to do His holy work; and those who desire to be a blessing to their fellow-men must copy the words of the Lord, and since it is their sanctification that is really needed, they must begin by sanctifying themselves.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 82.

REFERENCES: xvii. 19.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 204; E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 120; xvii. 20; J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, p. 18. xvii. 20, 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 668; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 376; R. Thomas, *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 112.

Chap. xvii., ver. 21.—"That they all may be one," etc.

THE Unity of the Race.

What a vision Jesus must have had of the essential oneness of the race. Man is one continuity of the race throughout all the ages. Bird and beast are always beginning; they are what bird and beast were thousands of years ago. Man is the exception. In his life to-day, he shows a whole past of human knowledge. It is the whole race of man which is the image of God; for ever in the making, never made. We are members of Christ; we are members of the whole body of humanity, past, present, and to come. The whole family in heaven and earth centres in Him; derives its life and spirit from Him.

I. In speaking the words of the text, Jesus was leaving the world and returning to the heavens; for party interests in the world were too strong to allow Him to live. But of one thing He was sure—that men would believe in Him; that after His death, the affections of men in the world would go out of the world, and would seek to centre themselves in Him. Our poor animal senses may be shut up in the world, but our hearts never. The hearts of the most sceptical men refuse to be dictated to by their unbelieving brains. The world cannot hold back its heart from Christ—that is the supreme fact in the world; and when other facts and attractions have had their day, human hearts are found struggling away towards the Christ of God and the Christ of humanity. He was sure, therefore, that although His last day in the world was come, He was only at the beginning of His reign.

II. "The Father Himself loveth you," says Jesus; "that you all may be one love and one glory." There is but one revealed glory—living glory—and that is the glory of God, the eternal love. He says, "I will give to the children that glory; I will centre it in their souls as the very fountain of their power." What an inseparable, unutterable union, this indwelling of the Divine glory will make. First of all, our union with God Himself; not by anything that is from ourselves, but first of all, by the glory of God Himself being put into our souls, and so uniting us with Himself, by Himself, and the very bond which unites us with heaven unites for ever one with another.

J. PULSFORD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 177.

REFERENCES: xvii. 22.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 182. G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 114; Bishop Simpson, *Sermons*, p. 81. xvii. 22, 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1472;

Ibid., *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 222. xvii. 22, 23.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 17. xvii. 23.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 213. xvii. 24.—W. B. Pope, *Sermons*, p. 140; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1892; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 82; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 82; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 123; A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, p. 208; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 148; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 31; vol. xvi., p. 234; *New Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 76; J. Duncan, *The Pulpit and Communion Table*, p. 198; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 77; W. Wilkinson, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 67.

Chap. xvii., ver. 24.—"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am," etc.

CHRIST'S Wish for Man.

This must always be the first joy of any really good life, its first joy and its first anxiety at once, the desire that others should enter into it. Indeed, here is a test of a man's life. Can you say: "I wish you were like me?" Can you take your purposes and standards of living, and quietly, deliberately, wish for all those who are nearest to you that they should be their standards and purposes too? Do not consent to be anything which you would not wish to ask the soul that is dearest to you to be. Be nothing which you would not wish all the world to be.

I. Thus, then, we understand Christ's longing for the companionship of His disciples. He wanted them to be with Him. That wish of His must have run through all the scale of companionship which we have traced, but it must have completed itself in the desire that they should be like Him, that they should have His character, that in the obedience of God, where He abode, they should abide with Him.

II. He wants His disciples to be with Him, "that they may behold My glory." Before these words can be cut entirely free from low associations and soar into the high pure meaning which belongs to them, we must remember what Christ's glory is which He desires us to see. Its essence, the heart and soul of it, must be His goodness. It is Christ's goodness then that He would have His people see. Think for a moment what prospects that wish of our Lord opens. Only by growth in goodness can His goodness open itself to us. What is He praying for then? Is it not that which we traced before in the first part of His prayer, the same exactly, that we might be like Him? So only can we see Him. It is His glory that He wants

us to see; but back of that, He wants us to be such men and women that we can see His glory. The only true danger is sin, and so the only true safety is holiness. What a sublime ambition. How it takes our vague, half-felt wishes and fills them with reality and strength, when the moral growth, which makes a man complete, is put before us, not abstractly, but in this picture of the dearest and noblest being that our souls can dream of, standing before us and saying to us: "Come unto Me," standing over us and praying for us, "Father, bring them where I am."

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Sermons*, p. 299.

Chap. xvii., ver. 25.—**"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me."**

THE Religion of Daily Life.

I. These are the words of the greatest man that ever lived; of the founder of our religion, even of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They were spoken the night before His death, concerning His followers on earth; and, I presume, He knew what He was saying. But those words are not what many persons would have expected. They would fancy that our Lord's prayer would have been rather after this fashion: "I pray that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, that they may be kept from the evil." But so prayed not Christ. Such persons would fancy that our Lord would rather have bid His followers retire into a desert, and there, amid the solitude of nature, to meditate on spiritual things; to prepare their souls for heaven. But so commanded not Christ. We cannot be thankful enough that Christ came, not to call men out of the world, but to teach them how to live in the world; not to proscribe work and business as irreligious, but to sanctify and ennoble it.

II. And that is what Christ did, by His example and by His words, during His whole life on earth. He never, by any act of His, gave encouragement to those who would separate religion from the common acts of daily life. We know how Christ spent His time before He began His ministry; that He spent it, not away from His fellow-men, in some desolate retirement, in some lonely wilderness; but that He worked, as other men work, with His own hands, as a carpenter in the village of Nazareth. By His example He taught us that, if we would live Christian lives, we must live useful ones; if we would follow Him and

His religion, we must not take ourselves out of the world, but do our duty in the world.

III. Never think that your work, whatever it is, need be a hindrance to religious life. It ought to be a help to you, not a hindrance. And it will be a help to you, if only you bear in mind that by doing your duty faithfully you are serving Him who said of old, "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

J. VAUGHAN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 4.

REFERENCES: xvii. 25-37.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 75. xviii. 26.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 148; W. M. Taylor, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 100. xvii. 25, 26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1378.

Chap. xvii., ver. 26.—"And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it," etc.

THE Eloquence of the Cross.

Christ was standing, when He spoke these words, on the very margin of His death, with little or nothing beyond except His crucifixion; and then He says, evidently pointing to His suffering, "I will declare Thy name." The declaration could be taken in no other sense than the eloquence of the Cross. For after that, He did not talk much with His disciples, but He left the Cross to stand out and speak alone. And had we but the eye of faith to penetrate that deep mystery, I believe that we might stand beneath the Cross on which the Saviour hung, and in that contemplation we might read more of God, and the reality of God's being, than books can ever contain or words can ever express.

I. The first view of the Father which the Cross presents to the mind is His holiness, His unutterable holiness. Sin was impossible to God. He determines to put sin away from Him; absolutely, irrevocably, eternally, to banish all and every sin, and every phase of sin, and every shade of sin, and every degree of sin, out of His own sight for ever. On His Son He laid the gathered sin of the whole fallen creation.

II. His justice. The original sentence of God against sin was fulfilled to the letter. Not a line was erased, not a syllable weakened. All do die—die as it were, eternally; there is no exception. Every man is a sinner, and every sinner dies. Some in themselves; some in Christ. Some in their own undying torments; some in their covenanted Head.

III. His wisdom. He did an act which gives the free pardon of the King of kings to every offender; while, by the same act,

He made the law honourable and sin detestable. Who shall dare to trifle with that which went on its unbending way, till it executed the Lord of Life and Glory?

IV. His love. Faithful is it—for it came from all eternity, and it stretches on, unchanging, to eternity again. Large it is—for it reaches from hell to heaven, and girdles the universe. But still, love is a retiring grace; and the heart that would read love, must make around itself a little sanctuary of deep, still, holy, personal thought; and then, in calm, quiet meditation, you will, by the still teachings of the Holy Ghost, find, in a way that no sermon can preach it, how the Father's love shines in the Cross, and how true it is about it, "I will declare it."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 120.

REFERENCES: xvii. 26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1667. —*Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 343. xviii.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 5, etc. xviii. 1.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 69; vol. xvi., p. 225; G. T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 168. xviii. 1-8.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 280. xviii. 1, 2.—A. Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, p. 60. xviii. 2-9.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 70; R. C. Trench, *Shipwrecks of Faith*, p. 59. xviii. 4-8.—*Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 326.

Chap. xviii., vers. 4-9.—"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?" etc.

CONSIDER this incident:—

I. As a remarkable momentary manifestation of our Lord's glory.

II. As a manifestation of the voluntariness of our Lord's suffering.

III. An instance, on a small scale, of Christ's self-sacrificing care for us.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 2nd series, p. 197.

REFERENCES: xviii. 4-9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 240; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 218.

Chap. xviii., ver. 6.—"As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

JUDAS and His Bond.

I. In the occurrence before us, we have a remarkable proof that, whilst Christ would not thwart the purposes of His enemies who thirsted for His blood, He was resolved to do

enough to render them inexcusable in putting Him to death. The foreknowledge of the Redeemer quite informed Him of all that was to happen—of the obstinacy with which His death would be sought, of the cruelty with which it would be compassed; but His foreknowledge did not interfere any more than it does in regard to any amongst ourselves, with the making every endeavour, consistent with human accountableness, to deter from wickedness, and to take away every excuse from those who persevered in its commission. The miracle actually wrought was exactly adapted to this. It went so far as to make those miserable who laid hands on Christ, but not so far as to frustrate their impious design.

II. It hardly ever happens that you commit any great sin without experiencing great resistance. I can promise the sinner that he will be withstood in his career; ay, so fearfully withstood that, as though it came on him as a voice mingling with the thunder in the heavens, he shall be prostrated to the ground, and there lie for a moment terror-stricken and confounded. And this moment will be just the turning-point in life for him. The man must not look to be kept on the ground; the mastery of conviction will release its stronghold, and he will again feel himself at liberty to rise—and what will he do then? Saul was struck to the ground, but he rose not from the earth without first foregoing his persecuting purpose, saying unto Jesus, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And Judas was struck to the earth, but he rose but to renew his traitorous attack, to make fresh quest after Jesus, whom he was determined to seize. The man in question may imitate Saul, or He may imitate Judas. He must not look for further opposition. If he rise from the earth to take another step towards crime, the likelihood is, that his path will be smooth, and he will be suffered to proceed without molestation. Be fearful of nothing so much as the being left to sin undisturbed. Come anything rather than the power of wrong-doing with ease.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1868 (see also *Voices of the Year*, vol. i., p. 311)

REFERENCES: xviii. 6.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 28; Parker, *Cavendish Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 141; W. F. Hook, *Sermons on the Miracles*, vol. ii., p. 227; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, vol. ii., p. 583. xviii. 8.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 86. xviii. 8, 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 722. xviii. 10, 11.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 72. xviii. 11.—A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 341; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xix., p. 118. xviii. 11.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 243. xviii. 11-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 73. xviii. 12-14.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv.,

p. 169. xviii. 15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 72. xviii. 15-18. —A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, pp. 469, 485. xviii. 15-27. —W. Milligan, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 372. xviii. 17.—W. M. Taylor, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 72, (see also *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 98). xviii. 19-24.—W. Hanna, *Last Days of our Lord's Passion*, p. 50.

Chap. xviii., ver. 28; xix., ver. 16.

THE Spirit of God striving with Man—Pontius Pilate judging the Lord Christ.

I. At first Pilate will scarcely attend to the accusers of Christ. He takes Jesus into the inner judgment hall of his palace, thinking probably that a very short inquiry will suffice. From the very beginning of this strange trial and all throughout, more and more, the pertinacity of the Jews tends to deepen the impression made on Pilate's mind, increases his concern, and makes him the more impatient for an adjustment.

II. Pilate thought he might evade the necessity of coming to a decision about Jesus and His claims. Let Herod be the judge; send the case, by all means, to Herod; he is on all accounts the proper person to dispose of it. But this expedient will not stand Pilate in stead; Jesus comes back to him, scourged indeed and buffeted, but not judged; neither absolved nor condemned. Herod mocks Him and sets Him at nought. Pilate attempts to make a compromise with the Jews. But though he selects one of the worst and most atrocious criminals then in custody, to be offered to them along with Jesus, and though, as Luke tells us, he three times most earnestly and pathetically beseeches the people to choose Jesus; he has the deep mortification of hearing their reiterated and impatient cry: "Not this man, but Barabbas," although Barabbas was a robber.

III. The struggle becomes more desperate as it draws near its close. The claim of Jesus, His claim of sovereignty, of truth, and now even of Divinity, is pressing closer and closer on Pilate's conscience. But alas! the loud cry prevails. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." It is a solemn reflection to think how near the vacillating judge, the despairing suicide, may once have been to a believer. It is a most emphatic warning to all, to trifle with no convictions of their own, to yield to no solicitations of others, to let the Word of God have free course in their hearts, and to give no resistance to the strivings of His Good Spirit.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Scripture Characters and Miscellanies*, p. 75.

Chap. xviii., ver. 36.—"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world," etc.

I. CONSIDER the nature of Christ's kingdom, "My kingdom is not of this world." It is spiritual. In other words, the emphatic mark of the rule of Christ which He was about to set up seems to be that of its perfect spirituality, of its utter unlikeness to those shifting earthly sovereignties which are founded in arms, which are maintained by policy, which are passed by death from one hand to another; or to that rude and turbulent anarchy which has often cast down and destroyed nations. He goes on to say, "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight." The points at issue between us would have to be decided by the broad tests of earthly warfare, strength measured against strength, and skill against skill, till one of the opposing forces should give way. But, as we see throughout our Lord's ministrations, He never would employ force at all. From the first, the Saviour was careful to impress on all who should come after Him that the weapons of the Christian warfare are not carnal, that the wrath of man could never work the righteousness of God, and that, when undertaking any work for Him, if we could not accomplish it by the power of loving suasion, gentleness and meekness, we should never accomplish it in any other way.

II. Consider how Christ establishes and maintains His dominion in our own hearts: (1) The means by which His subjects are brought into the kingdom are not of this world. He uses no force, employs no bribes, has recourse to no deceit or guile. The agency which works in the heart is the power of love; the hidden strength of Gospel bonds; the remnants of a better nature appealed to to say whether such a Saviour should be slighted by anybody with a heart at all. (2) There are laws and statutes by which the spiritual government is carried on. These are not like those which belong to a kingdom of this world, not like them in regard to the seat and limits of their jurisdiction. The empire of Christ is over the heart, and is satisfied with nothing but the casting down of heart-pride, and the rooting out of heart-sin, and the maintaining in all its subjects of heart-allegiance and duty. (3) The chastisements and the rewards of Christ's kingdom are not of the world. The attribute of spirituality marks all His dealings. Not of this world is our kingdom, not of this world is our hope. We look for a kingdom which shall not be moved, and whose King is both the first-begotten from the dead and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

D. MOORE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3122.

REFERENCES: xviii. 36.—A. Mursell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 225; E. de Pressensé, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 122; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 193; Parker, *Cavendish Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 205; S. A. Brooke, *Sermons*, p. 180; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xv., pp. 249, 261, 273, 285; D. Swing, *American Pulpit of the Day*, p. 241. xviii. 36-38.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 206.

Chap. xviii., ver. 37.—**"Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king," etc.**

IT was not as the Son of God that Jesus said this, but as the Son of man. It would have been nothing that the second Person in the Blessed Trinity should have been a King; of course He was, and much more than a King. But that poor, weak, despised man, that was standing there before Pontius Pilate, that was a King; and all Scripture confirms it. It was the manhood of Christ that was there. This is the marvel, and here is, the comfort.

I. The subjugation of the universe to the King Christ is now going on, and it is very gradual; we see not yet all things put under Him. Little by little it is extending itself: "One of a city, ten of a family." The increase will grow rapid and immense. When He comes again, at once to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear: "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Grand and awful! rather to be felt, than understood; where our little thoughts drift and drift for ever, on an ocean without a shore.

II. We pray: "Thy kingdom come." How much of that rich prayer is yet answered? how much are we waiting for? Three things it means: Thy kingdom in my heart; Thy kingdom over all the nations; Thy kingdom in the Second Advent. (1) The throne of God is set up in me. Sin is there, but now sin is only a rebel. It does not reign as it once did. (2) The second; it is being accomplished, and God bless the missions. (3) The third; we long and look for it with outstretched neck, and hail each gleam on the horizon.

III. When you go to this King in prayer, do not stint yourselves before His throne. Seek regal bounties. Ask for largesses worthy of a king. Not after your own little measure, but after His, according to that great name, which is above every name that is named in earth or heaven; and prove Him, on His heavenly throne, whether He will not open now the windows of heaven, and pour a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 156.

ONE man, so obscure that scarcely one historian thinks it worth while to mention His name—one man achieved an empire such as the world has never seen over the hearts and spirits of men. Such an empire, I suppose, rested on some principle. As the history of a worldly kingdom is the history of arms, of laws, or art, so must this kingdom have some secret spring of power through which it subjugates so many souls. The explanation is this. It is the mystery of Christ's suffering, working with the mystery of our conscience, from which His power proceeds.

I. The evangelists do not, it is clear, mean to represent the death of Christ as a mere termination of life. The storm that girdled round him is no new, unlooked-for thing. About to ascend to the throne above, He is a king still—I ought to have said He is therefore a king. To this end was He born. But for His assent the powers that slew Him could have had no power at all against Him; and, putting aside for a moment all consideration of effects resulting to others, I think we cannot, as men, be insensible to the greatness of this spectacle of a man, able to wield great influence over others by word and act, renouncing all this that He may die in a certain way because the duty has been laid upon Him by His Father so to die. He is more fit to reign as a king in men's hearts than if we had seen Him ride forth in majesty, amid the clang of martial music and the glittering of helmets, and the cheers of those who, in the flush of past successes, counted for certain the victory yet unachieved.

II. And yet there is something wanting. This devotion to God's will, this love to man, this beautiful calm and constancy, make Him admirable; they do not make Him mine. The mystery of Divine suffering requires the mystery of human conscience to explain it. Now, that mystery of human consciousness is simply this. Man attaches to his own actions the sense of responsibility. Out of the fact that man does praise and blame his own conduct, comes, if you will consider it, this surest evidence for God's existence and for your own immortality. A deep appreciation of what Jesus actually did for the sinful is the cause of our admitting Him to our hearts and minds to be our Friend, King, Saviour, Redeemer, Lord, and God.

ARCHBISHOP THOMSON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 427 (new series).

REFERENCES: xvii. 37.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1086; L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 236; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 1; vol. xvii., p. 302; A. P. Peabody, *Christian*

World Pulpit, vol. xi., p. 296; E. W. Shalders, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 406; J. Keble, *Sermons for Holy Week*, p. 57; E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 198; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 120; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 156.

Chap. xviii., vers. 37, 38.—**"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," etc.**

CONSIDER the Duty of being "true and just in all our dealings,"

I. As peculiarly a duty towards our neighbours. The whole frame of society stands by mutual confidence. Knaves sometimes seem to prosper in the world; but it is only because they are supposed to be honest, and because on the whole we are obliged to trust in each other as being honest. If the belief in truthfulness and honesty as the general characteristics of mankind were entirely done away with, the earth would scarcely be habitable; the bonds of society would be broken. There is therefore no duty, perhaps, towards our neighbour which it is more important to enforce than this, and the more so because it is one of the breach of which human laws can frequently take no cognisance.

II. One way in which we should take good heed to be true and just is that of estimating liberally, fairly, and in a Christian spirit the conduct of our neighbour. It is not just to suppose that people always act from bad motives, except when we can prove the contrary. Christian charity hopes all things; and, though Christian charity will consequently in this wicked world be often deceived, still it is better to be deceived than not to hope the best. If we are thoroughly penetrated by the spirit of Christ's religion, it will show itself in such ways as this; it is by descending to the affairs of common life, by hallowing our smallest and simplest actions, that the religion of Christ really shows its power, and that it is proved that we are new creatures—that the old things have passed away, and all things become new.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 4th series, p. 287.

REFERENCES: xviii. 38.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1644; Bishop Lightfoot, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 337; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 99; E. Thring, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 577; R. Winterbotham, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 290.

Chap. xviii., ver. 40.—**"Not this Man, but Barabbas."**

THE narrative of Jesus' arraignment before the civil power in Jerusalem affords the most vivid illustration in the New Testa-

ment of just two great moral lessons. Pilate's behaviour shows the wicked wrong of indecision; and the chief priests' choice of Barabbas' release shows the utter ruin of a wrong decision.

I. The moral of this scene turns upon the wilful choice made between these two leaders—the real and the pretended Christ. The whole history is often repeated even in these modern times. It will be well to bear in mind that the decision is offered and made between Jesus and Barabbas whenever the Lord of Glory is represented in a principle, in an institution, in a truth, in a person. The secret of the absurd choice published that day so vociferously, when the miscreant impostor came to the front, is found in the fact that the people did not choose for Him at all, but chose against Christ. They would not have this Man to reign over them. It is not true always that men love the evil they seem to clamour for; in many instances the explanation of their apparent preference is found in simple hatred of the truth which confronts them.

II. Our two lessons now appear plainly. (1) We see the wicked wrong of indecision. We are agreed that Pilate wished to let Jesus go. But when he gave Him up to the spite of His murderers he himself shared the crime. His name is put in the Apostles' Creed that all Christendom might hold it in "everlasting fame" of infamy; wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this man hath done be told for a memorial of him. (2) We see, finally, the utter ruin of a wrong decision. Goethe commences the fifth book of his autobiography with these somewhat discouraging words: "Every bird has its decoy, and every man is led and misled in a way peculiar to himself." We need not pause to discuss here the width of application such a statement might have. It was true of Pontius Pilate; it was true of that infuriated crowd clamouring for Barabbas before Christ.

C. S. ROBINSON, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 11.

REFERENCES: xvii. 40.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 595; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvii., p. 100; C. Stanford, *The Evening of our Lord's Ministry*, p. 273; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 145. xviii., xix.—W. Sanday, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 239. xix. 1.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 103; Parker, *Christian Commonwealth*, vol. vi., p. 623. xix. 1-6.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 149. xix. 1-37.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 208. xix. 2.—*Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 190. xix. 4.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 350. xix. 5.—Parsons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 269; C. Stanford, *Evening of our Lord's Ministry*, p. 289; H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 319; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 140; vol. x., p. 208; R. Davey, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 222; F.

Wagstaff, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 371; R. Balgarnie, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii.; E. Paxton Hood, *Catholic Sermons*, pp. 99, 172; Bishop Magee, *Sermons at Bath*, p. 136; H. I. Wilmot Buxton, *Literary Churchman Sermons*, p. 102.; F. King, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 193.

Chap. xix., ver. 9.—"Pilate saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer."

I. If we try to place ourselves in the position of one of our fellow-creatures placed on trial for his life, and before judges from whom he had little to look for in the way of consideration or mercy, we can understand that the silence of a perfectly innocent man might be natural for more reasons than one. There might be (1) the silence of sheer bewilderment, (2) the silence of terror, (3) the silence of mistaken prudence, (4) the silence of disdain.

II. None of these motives for silence will account for that of our Lord before Pilate. His silence meant (1) rebuke, (2) instruction, (3) charity.

H. P. Liddon, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1134.

References: xix. 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 216. xix. 13-37.—R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters and Miscellanies*, p. 96. xix. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1353; *Ibid.*, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 160; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 340. xix. 15.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 145; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 83. xix. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 497; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 94. xix. 16-18.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 361. xix. 16-27.—T. R. Stevenson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 280. xix. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1683. xix. 18—J. Murray, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 394. xix. 19.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 407. xix. 19, 20.—A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii. p. 168.

Chap. xix., ver. 22.—"Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written."

I. Man's life is an inscription on a Cross.

II. That inscription is written irrevocably (1) on the tablet of the eternal past, (2) on the tablet of the immortal memory.

III. That inscription is read by God. This, then, is life: man writing silently, constantly, his life inscription over one of the two crosses which stand in his soul, and the great, silent God reading it all the while. God will make *him* read it with vain tears hereafter.

E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 106.

References: xix. 22.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 359.

Chap. xix., vers. 23, 24.—"Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout," etc.

As the robe which Christ wore closest to Himself was curiously and strangely wrought without seam from head to foot, so all that Jesus Christ has left behind is singular, unique, harmonious; for, judge Him by the religious system which He has left, or judge Him by the code of morality which He has left, or judge Him by the record of that stainless character, and you find Him to be strange, singular, one in this world's history for whom no fellow has yet been found.

I. Judge Him by the religious system. It is unique. His power, who died, has wiped away the frown which the pagan priesthood painted upon the brow of God. The Gospel, which He puts into the hands of His disciples and ministers, proclaims the fact of God reconciled to the world. That which we have received is emphatically the ministry of reconciliation. We have access by one Spirit to the Father.

II. But none the less, when we view Him by the system of morality that He left, wherewith the world was to be clad, we have the same unique and harmonious character. If the religious system found its basis in the love of God to mankind, none the less does the morality find its basis in this—the parallel love of man to man. He was as one who gathered the stray flowers which had been strewn by ages along the pathway of humanity to bind them into one cluster. But He did more. He gave a root to all these flowers; He planted them where they indeed could grow, when He laid the truth and the basis of all humanity in this, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself."

III. But more. If we may take that robe which He left behind as the emblem of the system of teaching, of worship, and of morality, even more have we an analogy in Scripture for taking it as representative of the holy character of Christ. Like the one thread which wove that seamless robe, love appears everywhere under the embroidered pattern. That love it is which forms, as it were, the very strength of His character, and becomes one with Him in all that He does, is identified with Him when He is most severe, is not severed from Him when He is most humiliated. It is the one thing which weaves the character together—weaves it from the top throughout. This robe is a legacy to us. Unlike the envenomed robe which wrapt Alcides, this legacy has no fictitious righteousness which

cannot become ours; but, clad in it, we may receive, not poison, but life-giving power.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 696.

Chap. xix., ver. 25.—"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother," etc.

THE Honour due to the Virgin Mary.

I. We find in the New Testament that in place of there being any sanction in Scripture for the extraordinary honour being rendered to the mother of our Lord, the weight of testimony is all the other way. We believe that the most satisfactory account which can be given of this is, that our Lord foresaw the idolatrous homage which in progress of time would be rendered to the Virgin, and He determined that there should be nothing in His deportment from which such homage might draw even the shadow of encouragement. The Papist, indeed, in default of other scriptural evidence, would make use of the words of the angel in the annunciation, saying that they imply or involve an act of adoration of the Virgin. The words, as we translate them are "Hail, thou that art highly favoured." The Papist would translate them, "Hail, thou that art full of grace," and thus they make the salutation of the angel the same with their Ave Maria, the repetition of which is prescribed as a religious act of no ordinary worth.

II. We are right in supposing that Mary's life must havebeen one of great suffering, so that she is to be admired as a martyr. The words spoken by Christ on the Cross to His mother are exquisitely beautiful, as proving the thoughtfulness of Christ to her, when we might have supposed Him so occupied with His mighty undertaking on behalf of this creation, that He had no soothing word to give to a sorrowing individual; yet if ever words cut the human heart, these must have been as a sword to that weeping Mary. If she had entertained a lingering hope that Christ would yet triumph over His enemies, and remain to bless His friends, these words must have destroyed it, for providing for her another son did but tell her so clearly and emphatically, that she was losing Him altogether: or that, even if He rose from the dead, it would not be to renew the sweet intercourse of earthly affection. Surely the last words of Christ addressed to His mother, though we may allow them to have been words overflowing with tenderness, must have cut that mother to the quick; and we need adduce nothing further in evidence that Mary herself may justly be regarded as having had

martyrdom to undergo, at least at the awful hour of our Lord's crucifixion; and that, as we admire her for her faith, and the meekness with which she received the annunciation that Christ should be her son, so ought we to admire in her, the courage and the constancy of one who is led up to the scaffold, or fastened to the stake, as a confessor for God and truth, when we read the simple plaintive statement of our text, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother."

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1682.

REFERENCES: xix. 28.—W. Lamson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 383; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 364; vol. iv., p. 169; Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 261; C. J. Vaughan, *Words from the Cross*, p. 30; *Ibid.*, *Plain Sermons*, p. 218; E. Paxton Hood, *Sermons*, p. 179; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 11th series, p. 157; J. Stalker, *The New Song*, p. 65; W. Hanna, *The Last Day of our Lord's Passion*, p. 201; J. Keble, *Sermons for Holy Week*, p. 192.

Chap. xix., vers. 25-27.—**"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene," etc.**

I. THE death of the Lord Jesus Christ differed from all other deaths in this, that the death was voluntary. Death is to us the natural termination of life, and the event of death is the only one which we can venture to prophecy, without fear of mistake, as certain to happen to us all. But the death of Christ did not stand to His life in any such relation as this; death had no power in the nature of things over Him; His birth and His death were alike under the influence of His own will. What an infinite difference there is between a death like this, and a death which is merely the working out of the original word of God concerning man: "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return."

II. Again, the death of our Lord was different from that of other men, and manifested its Divine character, in the fact that it was one to which no corruption belonged. There was a Divine life in the human body of Jesus Christ, over which death had no power; the triumph of the grave, such as it was, was short, it was like a summer night, when the west has not ceased to glow before the dawn is seen in the east. The short residence of Christ's body in the tomb proved more clearly than anything else could have done, that His words were true concerning His power to take up His life again; that it was not taken from Him; that it was a sacrifice made by Himself to the will of God; and

that He could conquer the grave, as He could conquer all other enemies of mankind.

III. Our Lord's death had its Divine side, but it was also a human death; therefore it was a death of suffering. Putting the intensity of these sufferings out of the question, their reality is a thing which we must by no means put out of the question; they were the sufferings of a man, the sufferings of one weak, according to the weakness of human flesh; the same sufferings, so far as the body is concerned, as those of the thieves crucified on either hand. He who died upon the Cross is one of our own race, He is the seed of that woman who bore us all, and He is the eldest brother of the family to which we all belong. Yet this is He whose word stilled the waves; this is He who said to Lazarus, "Come forth," and lo, now that He hangs upon the cross, the sun is darkened and the veil of the temple is rent, the graves cannot hold their dead. "Truly this is the Son of God." Therefore we must not grieve over Him and say, "Alas, my brother;" but we must take another tone and say, "By Thy Cross and Passion, good Lord, deliver us."

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 261.

OBSERVE—

I. How these words reveal to us the self-forgetfulness of Christ's love. His sorrow was too deep and too sacred for our weak hearts to understand. In that awful hour He was indeed alone. His enemies mocked and reviled Him. His friends stood beneath His cross unable to offer Him more than the tribute of a silent sympathy. His God, so it seemed, had forsaken Him. Yes, He was alone, with none to understand Him, none to help Him, as He bowed beneath the burden of that unspeakable woe. In the loneliness of that suffering all His thoughts were for others, not for Himself. First He intercedes, then He promises, then He provides. Jesus forgot His own grief—the greatest grief that ever fell upon human heart—that He might minister to the grief of others.

II. As these words show us the self-forgetfulness of Christ's love, so in the next place they are a striking evidence of His filial tenderness. He who seemed to slight all human ties of birth and kindred, paused in the very act of accomplishing the great purpose of redemption, to speak words of comfort to His afflicted mother. And how is it with us? How is it with us who so often suffer our work for God to be a pretence for the neglect of our duties as members one of another? Whatever

other duty God may have given us to do, it can never excuse the parent in neglecting the child, or the child in being disobedient to the parent. That only is true work for God which sheds its pure and heavenly light on every bond of nature and of kindred.

III. Observe the wise thoughtfulness of the Saviour's love. That was a solemn leave taking or tender farewell—"Woman, behold thy son." He can no more be her son, but she shall have another son. "From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." Of all the disciples, there can be no doubt that St. John was, in a worldly sense, best able to bear this burden; for, unlike the rest, he was probably in easy, if not affluent circumstances. John, the Apostle of love, John who had drunk so deeply of his Master's spirit, John who lay in His bosom, John whose words are the very echo of his Master's words—he it was who was best fitted to cherish and comfort, because he was best able to understand, the hidden inner life of the forlorn and desolate mother. The wise thoughtful love which exactly understands the hearts of others can only be learned at the foot of Christ's cross.

J. J. S. PEROWNE, *Sermons*, p. 46.

REFERENCES: xix. 25-27.—W. HANNA, *Last Day of our Lord's Passion*, p. 201; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 191; A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 485; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 364. xix. 25-30.—*Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 142.

Chap. xix., ver. 26.—**"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son!"**

WHATEVER the ruling passion has been, it becomes strengthened and intensified in the hour of death. Such was the death of Jesus our Lord. In Him there had been but one quenchless passion. The thirst to do good had marked every hour and every action of His life. Behold, as He draws near to the end, the same passion, the same earnest thoughtfulness for others, lives as strongly as before; and the passion is the noble passion of benevolence in life, and of quenchless benevolence in death. And that which shows itself in earnest benevolence shows itself also in the thoughtfulness of His last hour, for around Him, no matter what disturbing influences, no matter what disturbing scenes, no matter what difficulty assails His dying moments, still here through the anguish of flesh, still strong through the faintness of death, the spirit of His benevolence and thoughtfulness for others triumphs over all. "Behold," He says, "thy mother; behold thy son."

I. No incident in the life of Christ is a mere naked fact. Beautiful as the incident is, as a flower gathered on the grave of one we loved, yet still it is a flower likewise in this; it carries with it the germ of an everlasting principle. That principle is this—that in the cross of Jesus Christ new relationships have been established. Links which had no existence before, have been forged in His death, and where links of sympathy existed before, His death has welded them more strongly together.

II. But Jesus Christ is not content to leave us thus, proclaiming that in His cross new relationships are established. He also proclaims by His words that there are new obligations also. There is a law in our nature by which in proportion to the awakening of sentiment, is the diminution of practical action. There is a thrill of enthusiasm which stirs the heart under the influence of some sentiment; and we, because we have felt nobly, cannot say that we have acted nobly also, and therefore Jesus Christ enforces the obligation by His very position at this moment. It is when He can no longer care for His mother, that He commits her to the care of the beloved disciple. It is when John can no longer lay his head upon the breast of his Master, that Christ appoints him to that which in a sort may be a substitute—the love of a new-found mother at His cross. Thus He precludes Himself from the very sphere of benevolence, that He may force upon us the necessity of discharging that which His absence from earth renders it impossible that He should do. He leaves certain great principles in the world, initiated by His teaching, enforced by His example, and He commits their discharge to us.

BISHOP BOYD-CARPENTER, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 872.

REFERENCES: xix. 26, 27.—J. N. Norton, *Golden Truths*, p. 194; J. Stalker, *The New Song*, p. 65; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 11th series, p. 157; C. J. Vaughan, *Words from the Cross*, p. 30. xix. 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1409; J. N. Norton, *Golden Truths*, p. 206; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 270; J. Keble, *Sermons for Holy Week*, p. 271; C. J. Vaughan, *Words from the Cross*, p. 57; *Ibid.*, *Lessons of the Cross and Passion*, p. 161. xix. 28, 29.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 123. xix. 28-30.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 365.

Chap. xix., ver. 27.—"That hour."

LOOK at that hour. Notice—

I. Its anticipations. It has always seemed to me to be a fact fatal to the unpropitiatory theory of that hour, that it had been anticipated and expected by Christ Himself. It did not startle Him or take Him by surprise. He did not avoid it or recoil

from it. "The hour cometh," said He. On the other hand, He did not hasten His advances to it; He did not precipitate the event which hailed Him and beckoned Him to that hour. "My hour is not yet come." Amidst the mournful feelings which evidently oppressed Him with an appalling weight, we are surprised at the cheerfulness with which He contemplates the advance of that hour. He stands amidst a rapidly-weaving web and mesh of harrowing and agonising events, time and eternity rapidly plying the shuttles. He is gradually being caught in the entanglement of a web by which He is to be at once agonised, and which He is to destroy.

II. Its realisations. The end was a mediatorial sacrifice. I see Him leading on victoriously Time, with all its wreck to thrones and kingdoms and empires, to the end of that hour; for He won the right. He descended, that He might ascend far above all principality and power; forms, spectres of the holy dead, pointing of the prophetic finger, seem to pass before the cross in that hour. Did not that hour behold the agony of nature? I stand by that hour, and read by its volcanic flame, by the livid and lurid hues, that nature has fallen from God as well as man. I see that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain, waiting for the great end of time; to wit, the redemption of the very body—the vesture behind which the fallen moral being has retreated.

III. The consequences flowing from that hour. (1) It changed the world. (2) Its moral influence over other worlds must be commensurate to the majesty, magnitude, and magnificence of the interests involved in it.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Sermons*, p. 179.

REFERENCE: xix. 28.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 169.

Chap. xix., ver. 30.—"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished," etc.

I. THESE words, as uttered by our Saviour on the cross, have a wide and deep meaning. For as His life was totally unlike that of all other men, so was His death. He did not live for Himself, or to Himself, nor as one of many; nor did He die so. He died, as He had lived, wholly for mankind, according to the determinate counsel and ordinance of God. Therefore, that which He declared to be finished when He was about to give up the ghost, must have been the great work for which He came into the world, and which was wrought by Him and in Him for all mankind. His warfare, the whole of that warfare which He

came to wage for mankind, was accomplished; the iniquity of mankind was pardoned—or, at least, the gate of pardon had been set open for penitent faith. As God's work was the work of creating the world, and His rest was the rest of governing and guarding and upholding the world which He had created, so our Saviour's work was that of renewing man's nature, and of laying the foundations of His Church—of laying down Himself, His own Incarnate Deity and Divine humanity, to be its chief corner-stone; and His rest was that of watching over and directing and strengthening and sanctifying His Church, and all its members.

II. Although the great work which Christ came to do was finished once for all on this day, it was not finished as when we finish a work, and leave it to itself and turn to something else. It was wrought, even as the work of the creation was, in order that it might be the teeming parent of countless works of the same kind—the first in an endless chain, that should girdle the earth and stretch through all ages. While in one sense it was an end, in another it was a beginning—an end of the warfare and struggle, which had been desolating the earth hopelessly ever since the Fall, and a beginning of the peace, in which the victory won on that day was to receive its everlasting consummation. He conquered sin and Satan for us, in order that He might conquer them in us; and that we might conquer them for Him, through His love constraining and His strength enabling us.

J. C. HARE, *Sermons in Herstmonceux Church*, p. 361.

Chap. xix., ver. 30.—"Jesus bowed His head, and gave up the ghost."

THE Cross, the Victory over Sin.

I. If we look at the world, without the knowledge of Christ, without the hope of a Saviour and deliverer, the whole race of man seems to be dashed about helplessly, in a rushing whirlpool of sin, or to lie like the host of the Egyptians, at the bottom and on the shore of the sea. The whole race of man, without Christ, seems to be under a heavy yoke of sin, against which they can hardly so much as struggle; and, consequently, to be under a sweeping sentence of condemnation. If one were to look abroad over the earth, and to behold what is going on wherever men are gathered together, and what is lurking and brooding in their hearts—if one were to behold all this, with a knowledge of sin, of its hatefulness and deadliness, yet without any knowledge of Christ, and of the redemption which He has

wrought from sin, it could hardly seem but as though Satan had gained a great victory over God, as though he must have outwitted God or overpowered Him, as though he had stolen the earth out of God's keeping, and brought it over to the side of hell.

II. In the death of Christ was made manifest how God could be holy, could have a holy hatred of sin, and yet could have compassion upon sinners; how He could be just, and yet the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus. The Son of God became the Son of Man, and took our nature upon Him, and thereby lifted that nature out of its sinful pollutions into the light of perfect purity, and bore our sins upon the cross. As sin must needs die, He too, in that He bore our sins, submitted to death; He bore them for us, and for us He died; He died that we might live, purged from our sins in His blood. And thus, as in Adam we had all died, even so in Christ we were all made alive.

III. This, then, is the great choice which is set before you in this life. Sin would murder you; Christ would save you. You are not to fear your sins, as though they were too mighty for you, seeing that Christ has conquered them on your behalf. But having such a Leader, such a Captain, such a Bulwark and Tower of Strength, you are to fight against them boldly and undauntedly. He who died on the Cross to take away your sins, will strengthen you to fight against sin, and in His strength you shall overcome it.

J. C. HARE, *Sermons in Herstmonceux Church*, p. 151.

Chap. xix., ver. 30.—"It is finished."

I. THE personal suffering of Christ was finished.
II. The earthly errand was finished.
III. The human biography was finished.
IV. The official conflict was finished.
V. The Gospel message was finished.

C. S. ROBINSON, *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 204.

REFERENCES: xix. 30.—C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of the Cross and Passion*, p. 173; F. Schleiermacher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 184; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., Nos. 378, 421; J. N. Norton, *Golden Truths*, p. 213; G. Huntington, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 89; J. Keble, *Sermons for Holy Week*, p. 278; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 231; G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 72; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 224; M. Davies, *Catholic Sermons*, p. 137; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 204; Bishop Barry, *First Words in Australia*, p. 121; B. Jowett, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 1; W. M. Taylor, *Three Hundred Outlines on*

the New Testament, p. 101; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 155. xix. 31.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 254. xix. 31-37.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 366. xix. 34.—W. M. Taylor, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 102. xix. 35.—J. Keble, *Sermons for Saints' Days*, p. 48. xix. 33-35.—W. Hanna, *Last Day of our Lord's Passion*, p. 390. xix. 37.—F. D. Maurice, *Gospel of St. John*, p. 424; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 61. xix. 38.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 387; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 277. xix. 38, 39.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 1.

Chap. xix., vers. 38-40.

JOSEPH of Arimathea and Nicodemus at the Burial of Jesus.

I. Before the death of Jesus, the two rulers here named had been His secret disciples. They were no worse than multitudes are who pass as irreproachable. There may be, in the world of rank and fashion, many a man whom Christ has called to be a disciple, but who is ashamed of his order, and who is only a disciple secretly. Many a man who would be willing to ride after Christ to the sound of applause, or to speak for Christ before an attentive and appreciative audience, is now a disciple indeed, but secretly. You know, perhaps, many a Christian, loud in profession, great in repute, who, had he lived in the days of the Incarnation with only his present measure of spiritual strength, would have received from the Divine pen no nobler notice than this—a disciple of Jesus, but secretly. How would it have been with you? How is it with you now?

II. The death of Jesus roused the two secret disciples to declare themselves. A Christian will not keep his secret long. Grace is not a treasure to be hid in the earth in the midst of the tent. Sometimes, indeed, a seed may be dropped in some deep furrow, where the clods harden over it; and it is there, a seed, but secretly, until a tearing storm fetches it out into light. Sometimes a Christian may be like that seed, and a storm of trouble may be needed to reveal him. At the crucifixion of Christ, such a storm burst upon these two disciples. It revealed to their own minds their sin, and it brought out their hidden love. The heroism of faith is almost always kindled by desperate circumstances. The heroism of Joseph began in Christ's hour of darkness. He knew what the rulers meant to do, and when summoned in that hour to take His place with them at the trial, he might have kept away, so that after the black deed was done he might have said, "I was not there." But he went and boldly protested against the decision of the majority. No sooner was all over than, all on fire with indignant sorrow, he

went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus. His brave deed was successful. At the same time, it kindled similar courage in the heart of Nicodemus. They had often met in the high places of life, each knowing the other had faith in Christ that he was ashamed to profess; they now met at the cross, as at the altar of decision; the secret was out; and while the sky is blue, while the grass is green, and while the snow is white, what they did shall be told of them for a memorial.

C. STANFORD, *From Calvary to Olivet*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: xix. 38-49.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 367. xix. 39.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., pp. 16, 211. xix. 40, 41.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ix., p. 111. xix. 41.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 221; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 127; G. T. Coster, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 179.

Chap. xix., vers. 41, 42.—**"Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus," etc.**

I. THE burial of Christ lies between His humiliation and His exaltation. It is the pausing point of His history, who, for the suffering of death, was made a little lower than the angels; the moment when the hope and faith of His followers was most sorely tried; when victory seemed to be with His enemy. But it was only seeming. The grave was to Jesus Christ the gate of life; He passed through into His glorious resurrection.

II. By being buried, our Lord fulfilled what was written of Him; and not only that, but He thereby has given us the best and most positive assurance that He died for us. Men, it has been truly said, are not put into the earth before they die. The interment only follows after the expiration of soul and body, after life is extinct. The fact that our Blessed Lord was laid in the grave, sets the surest seal upon the reality of His sufferings. It proves that the awful scene on Calvary was no shadowy picture, no figment of man's invention, but a thing that actually occurred.

III. Again, the burial of Jesus Christ was needed as a preparation for His glorious resurrection. That great event—that on which our hope of living again rests—would have wanted its full proof, had it not been preceded by His interment. Men cannot be said to rise who have never died. If Christ our Lord, who came down from heaven, and was made man for us and for our salvation, had, by the power which was in Him, gone back to heaven without dying—as He surely might have done—

we could have had no sure pledge that we shall rise out of our graves. Assured as we are that Christ was buried, and that He rose again and left His tomb, we may have cheer and comfort in the prospect of our own death, and in looking back on their deaths who have gone before us.

R. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 84.

REFERENCES: xix. 41, 42.—H. Melvill, *Voices of the Year*, vol. i., p. 376; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 142; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 33.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 31. xx. 1.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 164. xx. 3-10.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 10. xx. 8-19.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 224.

Chap. xx., ver. 10.—"Then the disciples went away again unto their own home."

CHRIST Not in the Sepulchre.

I. The two disciples went away believing, because they found that Christ was not in the sepulchre. But Mary Magdalene came and told them that she had seen Him risen, and had heard His voice with her ears. What she told Peter and John, Peter and John are now telling to us. They tell us that they have heard Him, that they have seen Him with their eyes, have looked upon Him, yea, that their hands have handled Him. We may trust their testimony, as they trusted hers, being quite ready indeed to believe that He was alive, because they had found that He was not amongst the dead. And so we, finding that He is not amongst the dead, seeing and knowing the fruits of His gospel, the living and ever increasing fruits of it, may well believe that its Author is risen, and that the pains of death were loosed from off Him, because it was not possible that He should be holden by them. In this way we, like the two disciples, may be all said to be witnesses of Christ's resurrection.

II. But this is now past, as with the two disciples, and we are going again to our own homes. There, neither the empty sepulchre nor the risen Saviour are present before us, but common scenes and familiar occupations, which in themselves have nothing in them of Christ. May we not hope that Christ and Christ's Spirit will visit us the while in these our daily callings, as He came to His disciples Peter and John when following their business as fishers on the Lake of Gennesareth? How can we get Him to visit us? There is one answer—by prayer and by watchfulness. All of us have in truth one great call yet before us; and with respect to that we are all

preparing still. And for that great call, common to all of us, we need all the same common readiness; and that readiness will be effected in us only by the same means, if now, before it come, Christ and Christ's Spirit shall, in our homes and daily callings, be persuaded to visit us.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 190.

REFERENCE: xx. 10, 11.—J. Key, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 211.

Chap. xx., vers. 10-18.

MARY MAGDALENE at the Sepulchre.

We may see the following things in this passage:—

I. Mary's sorrow. (1) She sought for a lost Christ, and looked for Him where He was not to be found. (2) She failed to recognise Him, though so near to her. (3) She mistook the Divine work for man's. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

II. The strength of Mary's love.

III. The imperfection of Mary's faith.

IV. Our Lord's message sent by Mary. (1) It was a message of forgiveness. (2) A message of continued, unbroken affection. "Go and tell My *brethren*."

C. SHORT, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 235.

REFERENCES: xx. 11.—H. Scott Holland *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 232. xx. 11-14.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 218.

Chap. xx., vers. 11-18.—**"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre," etc.**

FIRST Appearance of the Risen Lord.

I. It was a real body that appeared to Mary. "Touch Me not," said Jesus. Then it was *possible* to touch Him. If not, prohibition was unnecessary. Wisdom never tells us to do what cannot be done. The face that looked at her was not a grey, ghastly gleam; the voice she heard was not a dead voice. The form she saw was not a form that trembled in the twilight far within the tomb, but one that stood boldly forth in the warm, clear, cheerful day outside.

II. We have in the words "Touch Me not," a gentle reproof, pointing to the lack of spirituality in Mary's faith. Even her worshipping thoughts of Jesus seemed to rise no higher than an embodied presence; to her mind, the supreme object of faith could be touched with fingers; she could only think of a Rabboni

Whose feet she could clasp, and to Whose garments she could cling. Just now, at least, her soul was cleaving to the dust, and was shut up in the world of sights, sounds and touches. The words of Jesus were to discipline and raise her faith, and to break to her the truth that He is no longer to be revealed under the forms of time, and in the world of sensation, but to the soul.

III. We are taught that although Mary had this check when beginning to touch the risen Christ, all the disciples may touch Him, now that He is in heaven. This is the natural conclusion from the language, "For I am not yet ascended to My Father." The word yet conveys the inference that when He was ascended, she might touch Him as much as she pleased.

IV. These words may have included an injunction to Mary not to delay her errand to the disciples. "Do not touch Me," might have meant "Do not linger." It is almost as if He had said: "Mary, there is no time now for tender intimacies, and protracted intercourse; I have this more important employment for you; go to them at once, for they must make haste if they would see Me; and you must make haste if you would give them fair notice." So now, Christ is always calling us away from the passive to the active—from personal enjoyment to practical service.

C. STANFORD, *From Calvary to Olivet*, p. 125.

REFERENCES: xx. 11-18.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 283; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 263.

Chap. xx., ver. 13.—**"And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."**

THERE is Reason in the Tears of Mary, for

I. They show her strong and tender love—the most reasonable of all possible forms of love—the love which she had for the perfect moral Being, our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. They expressed her bitter disappointment. She had come to find Him, and He was gone. "They have taken away my Lord."

III. They imply her longing for more knowledge about Him than she has, as yet.

IV. They are the earnest of her perseverance.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 937.

REFERENCES: xx. 13.—Parker, *Ark of God*, p. 162.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 198; vol. x., p. 362.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 183. xx. 14-16.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 193.

Chap. xx., ver. 15.—"She, supposing Him to be the gardener."

CHRIST the Gardener.

The mistake which Mary made in supposing Jesus to be the gardener, will suggest some profitable thoughts for Eastertide. "The time being spring," as good Bishop Andrews remarks in his sweet, quaint way, "and the place a garden, Christ's appearing as a gardener has some propriety about it." In one sense, as St. Gregory said, Christ may well be called a gardener, and indeed is one. Christ is ever what He seems to be.

I. Man began his earthly career in a garden, and Jesus, the Divine Word who made all things, was the Creator of this temporal paradise. In that sense, therefore, He may be accounted a gardener.

II. Again, at His glorious resurrection from the dead, He did but exemplify the calling of a gardener. Nor is this to end His wonder-working power. By virtue of His own resurrection, He will raise up our bodies also. "He will change all our graves into garden plots."

III. Jesus, as the Gardener, waters and cultivates the plants which His own right hand has planted—His heavenly graces, bestowed in answer to believing prayer; and in the devout reception of the holy sacrament, refreshes and revives the soul.

J. N. NORTON, *Old Paths*, p. 259.

REFERENCES: xx. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1699; *Ibid.*, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 163; J. M. Neale, *Sermons for Children*, p. 121; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 233; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 252; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 388; J. M. Neale, *Sermons*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 68. xx. 15, 16.—C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons Chiefly Practical*, p. 75.

Chap. xx., vers. 15-23.

NEXT to the absence of all notice of our Lord's mother, few things are more remarkable in the narrative of the period after the resurrection, than the silence respecting John.

I. John was born a lover of repose, of retirement. Left to himself he would never have been an adventurous or ambitious man. But let us not confound John's yielding gentleness, with that spirit of easy compliance which shuns all contest, because it does not feel that there is anything worth contending for. Beneath John's calm and soft exterior there lay a hidden strength. In the mean, vulgar strife of petty, earthly passions, John might have yielded where Peter would have stood firm. But in more exciting scenes, under more formidable tests, John would have stood firm where Peter might have

yielded. And there was latent heat as well as latent strength in John. As lightning lurks amid the warm, soft drops of the summer shower, so the force of a love-kindled zeal lurked in his gentle spirit.

II. Nor let us confound John's simplicity with shallowness. If it be the pure in heart who see God, John's was the eye to see farther into the highest of all regions than that of any of his fellows. If it be he that loveth who knoweth God, John's knowledge of God must have stood unrivalled. There were besides under that calm surface which the spirit of the beloved disciple displayed to the common eye of observation profound and glorious depths. The writer of the Gospel and the Epistle is the writer also of the Apocalypse; and if the Holy Spirit chose the human vehicle best fitted for receiving and transmitting the Divine communications, then to St. John we must assign not the pure, deep love alone of a gentle heart, but the vision and the faculty divine—the high imaginative power. It was the all-conquering grace of God that brought Peter and John into a union so near, and to both so beneficial—John's gentleness leaning upon Peter's strength; Peter's fervid zeal chastened by John's pure, calm love. In the glorious company of the Apostles they shone together as a double star, in whose complemental light, love and zeal, labour and rest, action and contemplation, the working servant and the waiting virgin, are brought into beauteous harmony.

W. HANNA, *The Forty Days*, p. 126.

REFERENCES: xx. 16.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 305; vol. vii., pp. 56, 235; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 389; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 350; R. H. Newton, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 378.

Chap. xx., ver. 17.—"**Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.**"

ASCENSION the Condition of the Spiritual Contact.

I. The brief saying of the text is pregnant with the deepest doctrine. It teaches us how poor a thing is bodily presence, even if it were the presence of the Saviour. It teaches us how they err from wisdom as well as from reason, who would reproduce upon earth in holy sacraments, the corporeal presence of the risen. How little can they have entered into the first principle of the Gospel, "God is Spirit," or into the first axiom of Christianity, which is,—The lowest spiritual ranks in the nature

of things above the highest carnal. The true contact with Christ presupposes His ascension; it is only by ascending far above all heavens that He can really fill all things. "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended."

II. The risen Saviour tells this sorrowful yet suddenly comforted disciple that she must not cling to Him. In itself, that sounds cheerless and unsympathetic. Then we begin to say it is quite true, as the Romanist seems to tell us, that Jesus Christ Himself, though we call Him our Saviour, is too holy, too Divine, to be approached without some sort of mediation. Let us find some intermediate—saint, angel, or virgin—whom we may approach and cling to, since He Himself has spoken the *Noli me tangere*. And yet the voice was very sweet and very tender which forbad the touching. Surely it promised the very access which it prohibited—promised in the name of the Ascended that which it postponed in the person of the Risen. Yes, that which we could not do, with any amount of permission—namely, the touching of the visible Saviour—that which is no loss therefore to us, whatever it may have seemed to be to her—is here opened to us, living after the ascension, as the very privilege and possession of our discipleship. "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended;" but now He is ascended, and He may be touched, clung to, and dwelt with.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 416.

THE Resurrection Change.

These words imply—

I. A change in our Blessed Lord Himself. While the teaching of the New Testament establishes a real organic connection between that which died and that which rises again, it intimates also a mighty change. When Mary saw the Lord she felt that death had been conquered; she knew not the change which death had made. And, therefore, His forbiddal of her loving touch. She puts out her hand to lay hold of Him, as of old; and lo! He draws Himself back in the mystery of His resurrection life, as though to break to her the solemn truth, that in Him the mortal had put on immortality, and might not bear contact with the dying. "Touch Me not." It is the measure of the change which shall pass upon all, in dying and rising from the dead.

II. Again, the words of Christ indicate not only a change in Himself, but in His relations with His followers. It is worthy of notice here that, though our Blessed Lord permitted not the

touch of Mary Magdalen, yet a few days later he invited the touch of St. Thomas. The cause of this various action is not far to seek. Mary did not doubt the reality of the Being who stood beside her. She required to be drawn on from a too material love to a love more spiritual in its nature. St. Thomas required to be convinced that what he saw was no illusion of the senses. The fault of the one ended where the fault of the other began. And yet, while Jesus Christ thus withdraws from the touch of Mary, He intimates the approach of a time of renewed close communion with Him. If He forbids her touch because He was not yet ascended, He thereby manifestly implies that, when He had ascended, then she should touch Him without rebuke. What is this? It is the opening out the vital doctrine of the real spiritual contact which exists between the servants of Christ, and Christ upon His throne. The Redeemer here seems to intimate that, when once He had ascended to the Father, there should recommence a close intercommunion between Himself and His disciples. He draws the woman from a lower to a higher love—from a carnal to a spiritual touch; He bids her not stretch forth her hand, but lift up her heart; not seek to detain Him on earth, but to rise herself towards heaven.

BISHOP WOODFORD, *Sermons on Subjects from the New Testament*, p. 54.

THE Magdalen's Touch.

Consider the warrant which the text gives us that Christ is ascended for real communion; what the measure of that communion is.

We must remember that to Christ's own feeling, the circumstance of the invisibility of His presence would make no difference. Our Lord feels just as much present with His people now, as when His bodily eyes saw them and His natural voice spoke to them. Therefore to Him it is just the same now, as if anybody really touched Him. To us, it is an exercise of faith to realise that. But to Him there is no alteration at all, since He was upon the earth. Now the act of Mary, of touching Jesus, whatever that touch was, must have been expressive, first, of the faith she had, that her own Lord and Saviour was again at her side; for, as she saw Him, she said simply, that one most beautiful of words, "Master." Thomas, too, when he touched, felt much the same. And our Saviour's repulse to Mary speaks only and exactly the same language as does the attitude of Thomas. Both exalt the spiritual power above the natural touch. The soul's embrace

of the unseen in both is made greater than all bodily evidence. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." It was the action, too, of adoring love. Our Saviour's words strikingly united those two feelings, as meeting in that higher touch, to which He directly led her now. "Touch Me," he virtually said, "Touch Me in your heart, when I am ascended." As the things of this outer world come and go, as they will, and all change and all die, we find that the things we touch, and cannot see, are far more real and far better than all that ever the natural senses know.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 130.

I. THERE are three arguments for the ascension of Christ—the external argument, the internal, and the personal. (1) The apostles declare that they saw the Lord ascend into heaven. Could they have united together and propagated a story which they did not credit? (2) The standing proof of the ascension of Christ to heaven is to be found in the mission and work of the Holy Spirit. (3) The personal argument for the ascension of Christ arises from the experience of His believing disciples.

II. The consequences of Christ's ascension are—(1) The completion of His work of atonement; (2) The stability of His Church, together with the supply of all that is needful to the perfecting of it through the work of the Holy Spirit; (3) The ascension furnishes to the faith and hope of individual believers a sure resting-place.

III. Encouragements which the ascension of Christ affords to believers. (1) It fortifies them against the assaults of their spiritual enemies. (2) It warrants them to count with the fullest confidence upon experiencing heavenly sympathy.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 518.

REFERENCES: xx. 17.—R. Rothe, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. i., p. 615; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 130.; vol. ii., p. 36; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 79; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 306; vol. iii., p. 227; vol. v., p. 172; S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 45; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 166; M. Dix, *Sermons, Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 133; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 85; vol. xviii., p. 222. xx. 18-27.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 367.

Chap. xx., ver. 19.—**"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."**

THE words "Peace be unto you" were the ordinary Jewish form of greeting, at least in later ages. The form marked the

grave, religious character of the Hebrew race. Just as the Greek, in his natural gaiety of heart, bid his neighbour "Hail" or "Joy"—just as the Roman, with his traditional notions of order and law, wished him safety—so the Jew, with a deep insight into the scope of the word, would just wish him "Peace." The form itself was of high antiquity. When the steward of Joseph's house would reassure the trembling brethren of the patriarch, who had found their money in their sacks, and had returned to Egypt, he said, in language which he had probably, as an Egyptian slave, heard from his master, and repeated by his orders, "Peace be unto you." When the religious Jew would invoke God's blessing on the holy city, it took this form. He would pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "Peace be within thy walls, prosperity within thy palaces." And thus, as a great Hebrew scholar has observed, we never find this greeting of peace used in the Old Testament as a mere conventional expression which had lost its meaning. "Peace be unto you." The ordinary Jewish greeting, no doubt, as it fell on the ears of the apostles, assured them that Jesus had re-entered, at any rate for a while, and under conditions, upon the social life of man; but the form, the old familiar form, which gave this assurance, was charged now with a spiritual meaning and power which should last through all time. What, then, is the peace of Christ's resurrection blessing?

I. The exact word which our Lord used undoubtedly means, in the first place, thriving, prospering, when a thing is as it should be according to its capacity or its origin. In this way the word implies the absence of disturbing causes, of injury, of sickness, of unhappiness, of want. And thus the idea of rest results from the original meaning of the word. A man has peace, it has been well said, when things are with him as they should be; and peace then is the absence of causes which would disturb the well-being of a society or of a man. It is that well-being conceived of as undisturbed. The peace which Christ breathed on the apostles was that which is needed by a spiritual society. And this peace might mean, first of all, freedom from interference on the part of those who did not belong to it. No doubt as they listened to the sounds of the Jewish mob out in the street, resting as they were in their upper chamber on that Easter evening, the apostles thought of this sense of the blessing. It was for them an insurance against rough handling, against persecution. Certainly it was no part of our Lord's design that Christians should be at constant war with Pagan or Jewish

society. On the contrary, the worshippers of Christ were to do what they could to live in social harmony with those who did not know or love their Master. And yet, if the apostles had thought that this was the meaning of the blessing, they would soon be undeceived. Pentecost was quickly followed by imprisonments, by martyrdoms. For three centuries the Church was almost continuously persecuted. The peace which Christ promised is independent of outward troubles. It certainly does not consist in their absence. Does the blessing, then, refer to concord among Christians? Certainly it was meant—we cannot doubt it—that peace should reign within the fold of Christ. He who is the author of peace and lover of concord so willed it; but neither here nor elsewhere did He impose His will mechanically upon baptised men. Such is our human imperfection that the very earnestness of faith has constantly been itself fatal to peace. Controversy, no doubt, is a bad thing; but there are worse things in the world than controversy. The existence of controversy does not forfeit the great gift, which our Lord made to His apostles on the evening of Easter day; for that gift was a gift—we cannot doubt it—chiefly and first, if not exclusively, to the individual soul.

II. Now, upon what conditions does the existence of this peace in the soul depend. (1) A first condition of its existence is the soul's possession of some definite religious principles. I say "some principles," because many men, who only know portions of the religious truth which is to be known and had in this life, yet make the most of the little they know, and may thus enjoy a large measure of inward peace. What is wanted by us men is something to cling to, something to fall back upon, something that will support and guide us amid the perplexities of thought—amid the impetuosities of passion. Without religious principles the human soul is like a ship at sea without chart, without compass. (2) The peace of the soul must be based on harmony between the conscience and our knowledge of truth. Now, this harmony is disturbed, to a certain extent, by the plain facts of every human life—to an immense extent by the facts of most human lives. Conscience, by its very activity—conscience, when it is honest and energetic—destroys peace, because it discovers a want of harmony between life and our highest knowledge. And here, too, our risen Lord is the giver of peace. What we cannot achieve, left to ourselves, we do achieve in and through Him. We hold out to Him the hand of faith; He reaches forward to us His inexhaustible merits, His word of life,

the sacraments of His Gospel; we become one with Him. And thus the work of righteousness is peace, and its effect on us is quietness and assurance for ever. Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (3) And the peace of the soul depends, lastly, on its embracing an adequate and legitimate object of affection. We are so constituted that our hearts must find repose in that which they can really love. Most people pass their lives in trying to solve this problem by attaching themselves to some created object. The love of power, the love of wealth, the love of position, the love of reputation—these are merely, at the best, temporary experiments. The attempt to find peace in the play of the domestic affections is much more respectable—much more likely to succeed for a term of years—for the heart is engaged in this way seriously and deeply. But neither husband, nor wife, nor son, nor daughter, can—we know it—be counted on as a perpetual possession. Death parts us all, sooner or later, for a time; and if the whole heart has been given to the lost friend or relative, peace is gone. When our risen Lord said in the upper chamber "Peace be unto you," He made His great and precious blessing an actual gift. He presented Himself risen from the tomb, inaccessible to the assaults of death, in His human as in His Divine nature, as an object of exhaustless affection to the human heart. The secret of inward peace is simplicity in the affections and in the purpose—the repose of the soul in presence of a love and of a beauty before which all else must pale.

H. P. LIDDON, No. 880, *Penny Pulpit.*

REFERENCES: xx. 19.—S. Baring Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 152; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 41; W. H. Jellie, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 309; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 194; vol. ii., p. 247; vol. iv., p. 264; vol. xiv., p. 230; C. Stanford, *From Calvary to Olivet*, p. 164; B. F. Westcott, *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*, p. 79; A. P. Stanley, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 385; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 91; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 240; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1254; W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 80.

Chap. xx. vers. 19, 20.

I. SUCH as was the state of the disciples on that sad evening, such must often be our state, at least in many respects. We too have all of us often forsaken our Lord and Master. We too have often lost Him. We may have forsaken Him through fear of the world. We may have forsaken Him to run after vanities. We may have forsaken Him to follow the devices of our own

hearts. At such seasons, when we are weighed down with the consciousness of having forsaken our Lord, the Tempter will come to us, and having already gained a hold on our hearts, will try to make sure of his prey. He comes and tells us that we have lost our Lord; that He is dead,—that to us, at least, He is dead; that to us, He is as though He had never been; that we have nothing to hope from Him; that He cannot love us; that we shall never see Him again, until we see Him as our Judge.

II. At such dark dreary seasons, when we have lost our Saviour; when the world has taken Him from us; when we have been turning away from Him and forsaking Him, and cannot find Him any more—what does it behove us to do? What did the disciples do? They assembled together, with their doors shut for fear of the Jews. Now this is just what we ought to do. We should assemble together. For this is our Lord's blessed and most gracious promise, that where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He will be in the midst of them. Sin, and the whole family of sin—all worldly thoughts, all worldly cares, all worldly and carnal lusts—these are the Jews who crucified Christ; these are the Jews that still crucify Him, that still draw away His disciples from Him, and tempt and lure them to forsake Him, and would sever them from Him for ever. These, then, are the Jews against whom you are to shut your doors.

III. "*Peace be unto you.*" Into whatsoever house Christ enters, these are the first words He speaks to that house. To whatsoever heart Christ manifests Himself, this is the blessed salutation with which He tries to win that heart to receive Him and abide with Him. It is when you are mourning over the loss of love, that you learn to feel how precious every token of it was. It is when you have been taught to know your want of peace, that you will feel what a blessed thing it is to have your Saviour come to you and say, "*Peace be unto you.*"

J. C. HARE, *Sermons in Herstmonceux Church*, p. 193.

REFERENCE: xx. 19, 20.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 213.

Chap. xx., vers. 19-23 (with Mark xvi., vers. 13, 14; Luke xxiv., vers. 33-49).

I. WE should misinterpret the incidents of this evening meeting, we should mistake the simple, immediate and precise object which, in using them, our Lord had in view, to explain these words as if they were intended to clothe the eleven apostles, and after them their successors or representatives,—to clothe any class

of officials in the Church exclusively with a power of remitting and retaining sins. There were others present as well as they. Those other members of the infant Church had the benediction pronounced on them as well as on the eleven; the instructions were given to them, as well as to the eleven; the breath was breathed on them, as well as on the eleven. Had Jesus meant, when He spoke of this remitting and retaining sins, to restrict to the eleven the power and privileges conferred, should He not by some word or token have made it manifest that such was His desire?

II. We are not in the least disposed to doubt that, while Christ speaks of the remitting and the retaining of sins as pertaining to the Church at large, His words cover the acts of the Church in her organised capacity—the inflicting and removing of ecclesiastical censures through the office-bearers, in the exercise of discipline. Here, however, we have two remarks to make: (1) That it is only so far as these acts are done by spiritual men, seeking and following the guidance of the Spirit; only so far as they are in accordance with Christ's own expressed will—that they are of any avail, or can plead any heavenly ratification; and (2) that all the force they carry is nothing more nor less, than an authoritative and official declaration of what that will of the Lord is. The Church's function is strictly limited to the announcing of a pardon, which it is for the grace of the Heavenly Forgiver alone to bestow. And if, in executing that simple but most honourable office of proclaiming unto all men that there is remission of sins through the name of Jesus, she teaches that it is alone through her channels—through channels that priestly or ordained consecrated hands can alone open—the pardon cometh, she trenches upon the rights and prerogatives of Him whom she represents, and turns that eye upon herself that should be turned alone on Him.

W. HANNA, *The Forty Days*, p. 65.

REFERENCES: xx. 19-23.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 218; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 194; vol. ii., p. 247; vol. iv., p. 264; B. F. Westcott, *Revelation of the Risen Lord*, p. 79. xx. 19-24.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 90.

Chap. xx., ver. 20.—**"Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."**

THE Nature of Christian Worship.

Consider—

I. The presence of the Lord Jesus Christ amongst His people. We attach to the Deity the idea of omnipresence. The concep-

tion is a tremendous one, but it is unquestionably a correct one. There have been individuals—men of gigantic mental powers and of untiring activity—who have contrived, by the multiplication and adjustment of skilfully ordered agencies, to make their influence felt through the whole of a mighty empire, and, as it were, to be present in every part of it at the same moment of time. But presence by influence is one thing, and presence by person another. And what we believe of the Godhead is this, that in every point of what we call space, God is to be found simultaneously, in all the force of His being and in all the plenitude of His power. There is a difference, however, between this Divine omnipresence of Christ and the kind of presence referred to in the narrative before us. About this latter there is something special. The Saviour, present in the assemblies of His worshipping people, is ready to make His presence felt by them; ready to open communications with them; ready to manifest Himself to them as He is not manifested to the world; ready so to lay His gentle but powerful touch upon their spirits, as that they shall feel that they have been admitted into the very audience chamber of their Father and their God.

II. Christ stands in the midst of His people for the purpose of blessing them and giving them peace. He does not come amongst us to find fault and to call up for judgment. He comes to bless. His language to us is the same as that which He addressed to His disciples of old—"Peace be unto you."

III. The disciples rejoiced at the presence of the Lord. In the act of worship the true disciple cares for fulfilment of duty, certainly; for religious emotion, certainly; but chiefly for personal communication with the personal God. It is God—God Himself, not merely something belonging to God—that he desires to know, to approach, to realise, to grasp, to possess. "My soul," says David, "is athirst for God, for the living God." When the Christian disciple realises Christ in his worship, when Christ has become an actual living personal Presence to him, meeting him, speaking to him, comforting him—then he has attained the object of his spiritual desire. And then, like the disciples of old, he is glad when he sees the Lord.

G. CALTHROP, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1063.

THE Resurrection of Christ.

There is in all nations an irrepressible instinct struggling after immortality. But these blind guesses go for nothing. Reason knows nothing to confirm them. Reason leaves us in

perplexity. If Christ be not risen, all other risings are fables. The only light has gone out: nothing has happened this year, nothing last year, nothing this century; nothing has happened in all the centuries of the past to throw light on the Beyond, if Christ be not risen. But, once accept the fact that Christ has risen from the dead, and see what questions of supreme importance it answers.

I. The first question of the present day, the first question of all ages, is this: Who is Jesus of Nazareth? It is a question of profoundest importance. Is He only the Son of man, or is He also the Son of God? In presence of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead, it seems easier to get rid of His humanity than of His Godhood. Well, if the Redeemer be Divine; if He is really Emmanuel—God with us; if I can look to Him and say, "My Lord and my God"—I cannot help being glad. Who can help being glad, with such a Saviour?

II. Another question which the Resurrection answers is this: Is Christ's sacrifice accepted and sufficient—the sacrifice that He offered once for all to God? The Resurrection is the answer. It is God's "Yea" to that voice from the cross, "It is finished." The prison doors are opened, and the Surety comes forth—not to life merely, but to glory and dominion.

III. What is Jesus Christ to us to-day? The resurrection declares the unbrokenness of His love and brotherhood. He has not cast aside the robe of our humanity. He wears it in glory; He wears it for ever. He is not ashamed to call us brethren.

IV. What is God's purpose concerning His redeemed? The special revelation of the New Testament is not that of the immortality of the soul, but of a future life resembling the life of Jesus Christ. He has risen from the dead—risen, not for Himself alone, but as the first-fruits of them that slept; and He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

J. CULROSS, *Christian World Pulpit*, March 2, 1887.

REFERENCES: xx. 20.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 175; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 312. xx. 20-23.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 502. xx. 21.—J. Keble, *Sermons for Saints' Days*, p. 185; see also *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. x., p. 82; E. B. Pusey, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 139.

Chap. xx., vers. 21-23.

THE Christian Mission.

I. These words were addressed in the first instance to the

apostles then present. But they are likewise addressed, and with no less force, to every one who finds joy in the presence of his Saviour. All such persons does Christ send to work His work upon earth. As He came to work the work of His heavenly Father, so all who are made partakers in His salvation are sent by Him to work the same work, each according to his calling and to the gift that he may have received. To all Christ gives the same charge; He sends all to work the work of God. This is His commandment. He sends them to work the work of God, as children of God, with the peaceful feeling of being reconciled to God and received into His family; to find their chief pleasure in working that work, with no constraint upon them, except the blessed constraint of love.

II. Thus we see on what a glorious mission every Christian is sent; we see what a blessing he bears with him, so long as he endeavours to fulfil that mission. Still, so weak and frail and mean-spirited is man that, notwithstanding the glory of the work, notwithstanding the blessing it brings with it, he shrinks from it; he cannot summon heart for so mighty an enterprise; he cannot rise out of the mire of his carnal nature, but sinks into it again. There are a host of excuses that people are wont to bring forward for shrinking from the work Christ sends them to do. To all, however, our Lord gives a complete answer; one and all He cuts off in the text. For when He had given His charge to the disciples, when He had sent them on the same mission on which He had been sent by His Father, "He breathed on them and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." He gave them the Holy Ghost to strengthen them, to enlighten them, to breathe life into their words and power into their arguments. And the same Holy Spirit is granted richly to all who have received Christ into their hearts as their Saviour, and have given themselves up to God to work their Master's work. They receive the Holy Ghost, not only to dwell in them and sanctify them, but also to strengthen and enlighten them for the work on which Christ sends them, and to help and prosper them in that work.

J. C. HARE, *Sermons in Herstmonceux Church*, p. 208.

REFERENCES: xx. 21-23.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 85. xx. 22.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 45. xx. 22, 23.—*Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 164. xx. 24.—H. Melvill, *Voices of the Year*, vol. ii., p. 347; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 267.

Chap. xx., vers. 24, 25.—"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came," etc.

THE Incredulity of St. Thomas.

I. It is easy and not uncommon to upbraid the incredulity of Thomas, and to entertain none but the most indefinite ideas as to the fault of which he was guilty. We ought to remember that the assertion of Christ being risen was an extraordinary and overwhelming assertion, to be received as true only when demonstrated by the most rigid proof. There could not be a greater mistake than supposing that faith is acceptable in proportion as it is unsupported by reason, or that men are required to believe what they are unable to prove. The great question is, whether proof enough had been already vouchsafed, or rather whether Thomas was warranted in refusing to believe on any testimony but that of his own senses. We may say, at once, that sufficient evidence had been afforded to Thomas in the predictions of Christ and in the testimony of his brethren. He had no right to regard the resurrection as well-nigh incredible. He had seen others raised by Christ, and he had heard from Christ that He would yet raise Himself; and if there seemed such an antecedent improbability as to be overcome by nothing but peculiar evidence, the testimony of the apostles ought to have been conclusive. The grand evil of the faithlessness of Thomas was that in refusing to be satisfied by any evidence but that of his senses, Thomas did his utmost to undermine the foundation on which Christianity would necessarily rest, and to establish a principle which would indicate universal infidelity; for it is manifestly impossible, where the proofs of a revelation are concerned, that evidence should be afforded to every man's senses, that the demonstration of miracle should be perpetually and individually repeated, so that none would have to rest on the testimony of others.

II. It is one thing to prove that Thomas laid undue stress upon evidence which addresses itself to the senses; and it is another thing to prove to you that we ourselves lose nothing by not having that sort of evidence. If it were possible that I could ascertain through my senses the truths of Christianity, certifying myself by the eye and the ear and the touch, that the Son of God died for me on the cross, and rose and ascended as my Intercessor, undoubtedly I might believe Christ to be my Saviour, but there would be nothing of that surrendering myself to the testimony of God, which is exacted from me in the absence of sensible proof, and which in itself is the finest

discipline for another state of being. The very basis of the faith of the man who has not seen, gives to that faith a moral excellence of the highest description. "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed."

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2011.

REFERENCE: xx. 24, 25.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 36.

Chap. xx., vers. 24-29.

THE Incredulity of Thomas.

The case of Thomas is—

I. A most instructive instance of the exercise and expression of a true, loving, affectionate, appropriating faith. It is outgoing, self-forgetting, Christ-engrossed. No raising by Thomas of any question as to whether one who had been incredulous so long would be unwelcome when at last he believed. No occupation of mind or heart with any personal considerations whatever. Christ is there before him; thought to be lost more than recovered; His eye beaming with love, His encouraging invitation given. No doubt about His willingness to receive, His desire to be trusted. Thomas yields at once to the power of such a gracious Presence, unshackled by any of those false barriers we so often raise; the full warm gushing tide of adoring, embracing, confiding love goes forth and pours itself out in the expression, "*My Lord and my God.*" Best and most blessed exercise of the spirit, when the eye in singleness of vision fixes upon Jesus, and, oblivious of itself and all about itself, the abashed heart fills with adoration, gratitude and love, and in the fulness of its emotion casts itself at the feet of Jesus, saying with Thomas, "My Lord, my God."

II. A guide and example to us how to treat those who have doubts and difficulties about the great facts and truths of religion. There was surely a singular toleration, a singular tenderness, a singular condescension in the manner of the Saviour's conduct here towards the doubting unbelieving apostle. There was much about those doubts of Thomas affording ground of gravest censure; the bad *morale* of the heart had much to do with them. It was not only an unreasonable; it was a proud and presumptuous position he took up, in dictating the conditions upon which alone he would believe. What abundant materials for controversy, for condemnation, did his case supply! Yet not by these does Jesus work upon him, but by love. And if in kindred case we could but present the Saviour as He is, and get the eye to rest upon

Him, and the heart to take in a right impression of the depth, and the tenderness, and the condescension of His love, might not many a vexed spirit be led to throw itself down before such a Saviour, saying, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

W. HANNA, *The Forty Days*, p. 86.

REFERENCE: **xx.** 24-29.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 537.

Chap. xx., vers. 24-30.

THOMAS.

I. Thomas was evidently a man of reserved nature—a melancholy man—haunted, as we should say, by a painful sense of his own individuality. He could not look at the bright side of things. He only spoke three words in the Gospel—three words—if you look at them, all melancholy. In his conduct, as shown in this passage, there were two prime defects. (1) Thomas did not take the plan to overcome his doubts; he was away on the first meeting of the disciples, and he missed the Lord by his absence. He was not at church that morning. Where was he, the melancholy man? (2) "Except," says Thomas. You see, he fixed his own standard and measure of belief and of evidence. Poor Thomas is confounding together things that differ. He wanted knowledge, and he would have called it faith. He makes himself the centre of his belief. "Except I shall see, I will not believe." That is the keep of Doubting Castle.

II. Between the zero and the zenith of faith—the spiritual life in the soul of man—there are four states. (1) The first state is perfect spiritual abortion. Neither seeing nor believing. Such persons neither note God nor things; they never think of causes; they never say, "Who is God, my Maker?" To such persons all things seem to *happen*. Their state is unconscious Atheism. (2) The second state is that in which men see, but do not believe. Do you notice these words of Thomas, "I *will not* believe." The fountain of belief is in the will. The fountain of doubt is in the will. "It is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (3) There is such a thing as believing and not seeing. If I could paint, I would paint Faith like a little child, leading Reason like a giant—like a stone-blind Belisarius—on his way. (4) It is possible to see and to believe. Truly this is the Divine life. In the world of sense they will tell you that you must see in order that you may believe. But my life has read me this lesson, that we must believe that we may see. How truly touching is that word

pronounced by Thomas on his liberation from his despair, "My Lord and my God." Ah! instantaneous word; it solves all difficulty. Many long nights have I wept in the cell of Doubting Castle—now I am free. Many a time have I watched for sunrise over the marshes and the fens, and the mournful east winds swept by me and chilled my cheek and my heart—now Thou art come, Thou art come, and I am free, "my Lord and my God."

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Sermons*, p. 85.

REFERENCES: xx. 24-30.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 426. xx. 24-31.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 295.

Chap. xx. ver. 25.—"The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord," etc.

I. THE doubt of Thomas was the resisting of a heart to whom the good news seemed to be too good to be true. Thomas could not believe that the Lord who was dead is really alive. The others imagined they had seen Him, but might it not be that it was, after all, what they themselves had first supposed, a spirit that they had believed too easily? That they were knowingly trying to deceive him he could not fancy; but might they not have deceived themselves; and if the Lord was risen, why was he the only one that had not seen Him? He could not see the character of his own compassionate tender Master in such dealing. That alone to my mind explains the continued doubting of the apostle.

II. There is a mighty difference between those who nurse their doubts, and the doubting Thomas. There is a world of difference between those who would be rid of their doubts but cannot, yet who still are sad, and downcast, and sorrowful through their doubts, and the modern doubters, at least some of them, who love not God, who dishonour Christ, who will not come unto Him that they may have life, who prefer the darkness because their deeds are evil—a world of difference. Let us never associate the two classes. Let us be charitable with the honest doubter; God will take care of him, as He took care of Thomas. But we can have no sympathy with the dishonest doubter, who often makes his doubts the plea for carelessness and Godlessness. But I mean for God's own children, blessed are they that have not seen Him and have believed. The spirit of Thomas is too frequent among us Christians still; busy in many a God-fearing heart, and doing its own terrible work there; robbing men of their rightful heritage, and making them fearful and sad, when

they might have joy and peace in believing. There must surely in such a case be something wrong. If it be distrust, and fear, and doubt that find a place within a Christian's heart, instead of peace and joy, much of it, I think, may be traced to the imperfect view that many have of the Gospel of Christ. It is faith in the Son of God that alone can strengthen a man, that can alone make a man free, that can alone relieve the burden of the mind, and give the sad one joy and peace. "Whom having not seen we love, and in Whom, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

D. MACLEOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 168.

REFERENCES: xx. 25.—H. P. Liddon, *Christmastide Sermons*, p. 1. xx. 26.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 230.

Chap. xx., vers. 26-29.

I. THE meeting renewed. I think that Dr. Vaughan has somewhere suggested, that although we have no record of the circumstance, it is possible that Christ, when with the disciples on the first occasion, expressed His will that henceforth the Sabbath should be transferred from the seventh to the first day. They seem to have met in a special manner on the first day in this second instance; a fact not easy to account for, except on the theory of a special law of Christ to that effect, given by word of lip or by motion of His secret Spirit.

II. The absentee returned. Thomas, as a true man, could not remain an absentee. Everything in grace, like everything in nature, will sooner or later go to its own company, and so did Thomas.

III. How the unbelief was dealt with. It is the affliction of a true disciple, and so the Saviour dealt with it. Unbelief has many varieties, and sometimes seems to proceed on different lines; but although at first the difference between these lines is great, they all converge to one point, and, if not arrested, work on to one fearful finality. The unbelief of Thomas was temperamental. There is an infinite difference between the unbelief which says a thing is not true, because it wishes it not to be true, and the unbelief which says a thing is not true, but would give all the world to be sure that it is true—between the unbelief of Thomas and the unbelief of Pilate; between the vibration of a tower and its fall. Jesus owns the difference. Full of sympathy, He stooped to heal the sickness and set right the error of a disciple, whose unbelief rose in its cry out of a broken heart.

IV. Jesus, in dealing with the unbelief of Thomas, revealed His forgiving love. Infirmity given way to and persisted in deepens into sin; and thus was sin developed out of the infirmity of this disciple. With patient pity, Christ sought the poor wanderer, and with unspeakable tenderness brought him back.

V. The confession made. "And Thomas answered and said unto Him, my Lord and my God." Touch was not thought of now. Christ was fully revealed. The grace of the offer was a revelation, the tone of the voice was a revelation; the forgiveness was a revelation, it was like Jesus, and like no one else; the result was instant surrender. Love has sharp sight and quick responsiveness; in the new light, yet mingled with a sense of mystery, he recognised the Lord of his heart; with wonder, with tender and exquisite ecstasy, and with adoring prostration of soul, he cried, "My Lord and my God."

C. STANFORD, *From Calvary to Olivet*, p 221.

Chap. xx., ver. 27 (with Heb. iv., ver. 3).—"**Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.**"

ST. THOMAS—Faith Triumphant in Doubt.

I. Two sorts of language are held respecting faith and belief; each combining in itself, as often happens, a curious mixture of truth and error. The one insists that belief is a thing wholly independent of our will, depending simply on the greater or less force of the evidence set before our minds; and that therefore, as faith can be no virtue, so unbelief can be no sin. The other pronounces that all unbelief arises out of an evil heart, and a dislike to the truths taught; nay, that if any man even disbelieves any proposition not properly religious in itself, but generally taught along with such as are religious, he cannot be considering the truth or falsehood of the particular question, simply as it is in itself true or false, but must disbelieve, because he has a dislike to other truths which are really religious. The two passages which I have chosen together for my text, will illustrate the question before us. The belief by which we enter into God's rest is clearly something moral. The unbelief of the apostle Thomas, which could not at once embrace the fact of the Lord's resurrection, assuredly arose from no wish or feeling in his mind against it.

II. The unbelief which is a sin is, to speak generally, an un-

belief of God's commandment, or of anything which He has told us, because we wish it not to be true. The unbelief which may be no sin, is a disbelief of God's promises, because we think them too good to be true; in other words, the believing not for joy; or again, the disbelief of such points about which our wishes are purely indifferent; we neither desire to believe nor have any reluctance to do so, but simply the evidence is not sufficient to convince us. Is our unbelief that of the apostle Thomas? No, I believe most rarely. Our unbelief is an unbelief of anything rather than of the truth of Christ's promises; our difficulty lies anywhere else but there. Our unbelief relates to Christ's warnings, to His solemn declarations of the necessity of devoting ourselves wholly to His service, to His assurances that there will be a judgment to try the very heart and reins, and a punishment for those who are condemned in that judgment, beyond all that our worst fears can reach to. It is not to such unbelievers that Christ reveals Himself. The gracious words, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands," will never be spoken to them. The faith we need is a faith not of words but of feeling; not contented with merely not denying, but with its whole heart and soul affirming.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 223.

THE Place of the Senses in Religion.

I. A first object of our Lord's words in the text was, we may dare to say, to place the truth of His resurrection from the dead beyond doubt in the mind of St. Thomas. It was more important to Thomas that he should be convinced of the truth of the resurrection than that he should first learn the unreasonableness of his motive for hesitating to believe it; and therefore our Lord meets him on his own terms. Thomas, though unreasonable, should be gratified; he should know by sensible pressure of his hand and finger, that he had before him no unsubstantial phantom form, but the very body that was crucified, answering in each open wound to the touch of sense, whatever new properties might have also attached to it.

II. And a second lesson to be learnt from these words of our Lord is the true value of the bodily senses in the investigation of truth. There are certain terms which they, and they only, can ascertain, and in verifying which they may and must be trusted. It is a false spiritualism which would cast discredit on the bodily senses acting within their own province. It is false to the constitution of nature, for if the bodily senses are

untrustworthy, how can we assume the trustworthiness of the spiritual senses? Religion does touch the material world at certain points, and the reality of its contact is to be decided, like all material facts, by the experiment of bodily sense. Whether our Lord really rose with His wounded body from the grave or not, was a question to be settled by the senses of St. Thomas, and our Lord, therefore, submitted Himself to the exacting terms which St. Thomas laid down as the conditions of faith.

III. And we learn, thirdly, from our Lord's words how to deal with doubts of the truth of religion, whether in ourselves or other people. Our Lord's prescription for dealing with doubt may be summed up in this rule—make the most of such truth as you still recognise, and the rest will follow. Thomas did not doubt the report of his senses. Well, then, let him make the most of that report. There is an intercommunication between truth and truth which lies in the nature of things, and the sway and guidance of which cannot be resisted by an honest mind; so that when any one truth is really grasped as true, the soul is in a fair way to recover healthiness of tone, and to put an end to the miserable reign of vagueness and doubt.

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 257.

REFERENCES: xx. 27.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 278; R. Maguire, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 252; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 169; E. Boaden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 404; J. Keble, *Sermons on Various Occasions*, p. 177; *Three Hundred Outlines from the New Testament*, p. 104; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 54. xx. 27, 28.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 68; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 156. xx. 27-29.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 341.

Chap. xx., ver. 28.—**"And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God."**

I. WE are, I think, hardly apt to be enough aware how much of all our Christian faith and hope must rest on the reality of our Lord's resurrection. It is, in the first place, the fulfilment of all prophecy. I mean, that whereas all prophecy looks forward to the triumph of good over evil—to its triumph not partially merely, but entirely, and with over-measure—so the resurrection of Christ is, as yet, the only adequate fulfilment of these expectations; but it is itself fully adequate. If Christ's triumph was complete, so also may be the triumph of those that are Christ's. But without this, let hope go as far as she will, let

faith be ever so confident, still prophecy has been unfulfilled, still experience gives no encouragement.

II. Well, then, may it be said with the apostle, that if Christ is not risen our faith is vain. His resurrection was, indeed, almost too great a joy to be believed. There might be illusion; the spirit of One so good, so beloved by God, might be allowed to return to comfort His friends, to assure them that death had not done all his work; but who could dare to hope that he should see, not the spirit of the dead, but the very person of the living Jesus? Surely it was a natural conviction of such overwhelming blessedness? "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." Thanks be to God, who allowed His apostle to be thus careful ere he consented to believe, that we from His care might derive such perfect confidence.

III. Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." A few days before Christ had prayed, not for His present disciples only, but for all those who were to believe on Him through their word. How graciously is His act in accordance with His prayer. The beloved disciple who had seen first the empty sepulchre, and who was now rejoicing in the full presence of Him who had been there, he was to convey what he had himself seen to the knowledge of posterity. And he was to convey it hallowed as it were by Christ's especial message—"Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." We have all our portion in the full conviction then afforded that He was risen indeed; and besides all this we have received a peculiar blessing; Christ Himself gives us the proof of His resurrection, and blesses us for the joy with which we welcome it.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons.*, vol. vi., p. 172.

REFERENCES: xx. 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1775; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 32.

Chap. xx., ver. 29.—"Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

I. ST. THOMAS loved his Master, as became an apostle, and was devoted to his service; but when he saw Him crucified, his faith failed for a season with that of the rest. Being weak in faith, he suspended his judgment, and seemed resolved not to believe

anything till he was told everything. Accordingly, when our Saviour appeared to him, eight days after His appearance to the rest, while He allowed Thomas his wish, and satisfied the senses that He was really alive, He accompanied the permission with a rebuke, and intimated that by yielding to his weakness, He was withdrawing from him what was a real blessedness. Consider then the nature of the believing temper, and why it is blessed.

I. Every religious mind, under every dispensation of Providence, will be in the habit of looking out of and beyond self, as regards all matters connected with the highest good. For a man of religious mind is he who attends to the rule of conscience, which is born with him, which he did not make for himself, and to which he feels bound in duty to submit. And conscience immediately diverts his thoughts to some Being exterior to himself, who gave it, and who evidently is superior to him; for a law implies a lawgiver, and a command implies a superior. He looks forth into the world to seek Him who is not of the world, to find behind the shadows and deceits of this shifting scene of time and sense, Him whose word is eternal, and whose presence is spiritual. This is the course of a religious mind, even when it is not blessed with the news of divine truth; and how much more will it welcome and gladly commit itself to the hand of God, when allowed to discern it in the Gospel. Such is faith as it arises in the multitude of those who believe, arising from their sense of the presence of God, originally certified to them by the inward voice of conscience.

II. This blessed temper of mind, which influences religious men in the greater matter of choosing or rejecting the Gospel, extends itself also into their reception of it in all its parts. As faith is content with but a little light to begin its journey by, and makes it much by acting upon it, so also it reads, as it were by twilight, the message of truth in its various details. It keeps steadily in view that Christ *speaks* in Scripture, and receives His words as if it *heard* them, as if some superior and friend spoke them, One whom it wished to please. Lastly, it rests contented with the revelation made to it; it has "found the Messias," and that is enough. The very principle of its former restlessness now keeps it from wandering when the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know the true God; wavering, fearfulness, superstitious trust in the creature, pursuit of novelties, are signs, not of faith, but of unbelief.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 13.

NOT Seeing, yet Believing.

I. It would be a vain and presumptuous thing to attempt to determine positively what was the cause of Thomas's unbelief, on the occasion to which these words refer. Some have endeavoured to excuse him altogether. But our Saviour's few emphatic words plainly show some failing in his mind, which was not to be justified. Otherwise He would not have said, "Be not faithless." However, it is quite according to what we all feel in our own hearts, to suppose that two feelings met in Thomas's mind. One entirely bad—a proud feeling—that having been absent on the previous Sunday, on the occasion of Christ's showing Himself to His other disciples, being vexed with himself, he did not like to receive from others what he would so much rather have witnessed himself. This supposition is confirmed by the resoluteness of the language he uses about it—for we never use resolute language unless we are conscious of an inward vexation. And the other feeling which Thomas probably had in his mind was this, that he wished it it to be just as he said; but the very eagerness of his desire became its own stumbling block, the intensity of the light made the light invisible—in other words, it was "too good to be true."

II. Now, take it either way, or take it both ways, and there are many Thomases. But wherein was Thomas's error? Does God expect us to believe on insufficient evidence? Thomas's error was this: Christ, before He died, had spoken the word—He had spoken it more than once—He had said "I will rise again." If the Lord had not said this, Thomas might have been excused; for then he would only have been disbelieving man; but now, when he was told that Christ had appeared, he ought to have recollected what he had heard Christ Himself say. He was responsible to do that; and against that word of Christ's, he ought not to have allowed any circumstances of sense or reason, however strong they might be, and however they might run counter to it, to weigh one single feather. The inference is clear, that whoever would be blessed must feel and show he feels the absolute claim, and the full certainty, and the entire supremacy of every word of Almighty God.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 335.

I. OUR Lord does not treat the doubt of Thomas as a sin. There is not the slightest trace of fault-finding in what He says to him. He only tells him that his is not the most blessed state. The most blessed state is that of those who can believe without such proof as this. There are such minds. There are

minds to whom the inward proof is everything. They believe not on the evidence of their senses or of their mere reason, but on that of their consciences and hearts. Their spirits within them are so attuned to the truth that the moment it is presented to them they accept it at once. And this is certainly far the higher state—the more blessed, the more heavenly. But still the doubt of St. Thomas was not a sinful doubt.

II. St. Thomas's doubt is a type and his character an example of what is common among Christians. There are many who are startled at times by strange perplexities. Doubts arise in their minds, or are suggested by others, about doctrines which they have always taken for granted, or about facts connected with those doctrines. What shall we do when we find these difficulties arise? (1) In the first place let us not permit them to shake our hold of God and of conscience. However far our doubts may go, they cannot root up from within us, without our own consent, the power which claims to guide our lives with supreme authority. They cannot obliterate from within us the sense of right and wrong, and of the everlasting difference between them. By this a man may yet live if he have nothing else to live by, and God will assuredly give him more in his own good time. (2) But again, let us not treat such doubts as sins, which they are not, but as perplexities, which they are. As we must not quit our hold on God, so do not let us fancy that God has quitted His hold on us. Doubts are in fact as much the messengers of God's providence as any other voices that reach us. They may distress us, but they cannot destroy us, for we are in the hands of God. (3) In all such cases remember St. Thomas, and feel sure that what is wanting Christ will give. You are not called on to believe till you are fully able to do so; but you are called on to trust.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 90.

REFERENCES: xx. 29.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 172; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 174; C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 414; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 329; W. Frankland, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 180; vol. ii., p. 340; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. vi., p. 1; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 335; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 268; G. Macdonald, *Unspoken Sermons*, p. 50; T. T. Lynch, *Sermons for my Curates*, p. 33.

Chap. xx., vers. 30, 31.—"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book," etc.

I. WE have here set forth the incompleteness of Scripture. Nations and men appear on its pages abruptly, rending the

curtain of oblivion, and striding to the front of the stage for a moment; and then they disappear, swallowed up of night. It has no care to tell the stories of any of its heroes, except for so long as they were the organs of that Divine breath, which, breathed through the weakest reed, makes music. The self-revelation of God, not the acts and fortunes of even His noblest servants, is the theme of the Book. It is unique in the world's history, unique in what it says, and no less unique in what it does not say.

II. Notice the more immediate purpose which explains all these gaps and inconsistencies. John's Gospel, and the other three Gospels, and the whole Bible, New Testament and Old, have this for their purpose, to produce in men's hearts the faith in Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of God. Christ, the Son of God, is the centre of Scripture; and the Book —whatever may be the historical facts about its origin, its authorship and the date of the several portions of which it is composed—the Book is a unity, because there is driven right through it, like a core of gold, either in the way of prophecy and onward-looking anticipation, or in the way of history and grateful retrospect, the reference to the one "Name that is above every Name," the Name of the Christ the Son of God.

III. Notice the ultimate purpose of the whole. Scripture is not given to us merely to make us know something about God in Christ, nor only in order that we may have faith in the Christ thus revealed to us; but for a further end, great, glorious, but not distant—namely, that we may have life in His Name. Life is deep, mystical, inexplicable by any other words than itself. It includes pardon, holiness, well-being, immortality, heaven; but it is more than they all. Union with Christ in His Sonship, will bring life into dead hearts. He is the true Prometheus who has come from heaven with fire, the fire of the Divine life in the reed of His humanity, and He imparts it to us all if we will. He lays Himself upon us, as the prophet laid himself upon the little child in the upper chamber; and lip to lip, and beating heart to dead heart, He touches our death, and it is quickened into life.

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 131.

REFERENCES: xx. 30, 31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1631; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 78; F. D. Maurice, *Gospel of St. John*, p. 443; J. Wordsworth, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 233; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 233.

Chap. xx., ver. 31.

THE Trinity Disclosed in the Structure of St. John's Writings.

I. The Gospel of St. John commences with a solemn exposition of the Divinity of the Word and Son of God, considered in His immediate relation to the Deity of the Father, as commissioned to represent His unapproachable glory in the world of time and sense. It is the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. "He is the only begotten Son, which is in the bos om of the Father, and hath declared Him." But in the influences of the second, a new power is discovered, which all Scripture assigns to a third agent; and thus in the brief preface, the Father, the Word made flesh, the inworking Spirit proceeding from both, are shadowed before us; the opening prologue presents a summary of the whole majestic drama which follows.

II. The great article of faith which the Church commemorates on Trinity Sunday pervades the works of St. John, not only as a separate truth, but as a presiding principle; not only in the phraseology of the parts, but in the structure of the whole. We see that to him, the threefold activity of Father, Son and Spirit, was indeed the abstract of theology; it is a plastic power, working the whole mass of the composition to its peculiar type; somewhat as the vital principle of an organised frame silently gathers the entire aggregate of particles into the definite form appropriate to itself. In making this threefold distinction the basis of his whole scheme of instruction, St. John has taught you not only its absolute truth, but its relative importance. Learning from him the proportion of the faith, we will safely value that most which he thought most precious. If, under those brief but wondrous words—Father, Son and Spirit—he was accustomed to classify all the bright treasures of his inspiration; if into this mould every narrative, every exhortation, naturally flowed; if he was wont to see, in the adoration that bowed before this mysterious Triad of eternal powers, the last and loftiest act of religion; we cannot be wrong in preserving the equilibrium that he has fixed. And if to him this great belief was more than belief, this light was also life. May we also find in the Trinity, the ground of practical devotion, pure and deep, till, quickened by the power of this faith, the Three that bear record in heaven shall bear witness in our hearts.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 64.

REFERENCES: xx. 31.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 275; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 48; vol. iii., p. 289; F. W. Farrar,

Church of England Pulpit, vol. xiii., p. 85. xx.—W. Sanday, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 258. xx., xxi.—J. Vaughan, *Children's Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 31.

Chap. xxi., ver. 1.—**"After these things Jesus shewed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias," etc.**

I. In the touching incident related in this chapter, the first thing which strikes us is the grace of the Lord Jesus. Penitent as Peter was, it was needful to set him right with his brother apostles, whom he had first of all wronged by his forwardness, and next scandalised by his fall; and how admirably this is accomplished by the question: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" a question to which Peter replied so humbly, as to show that he claimed no pre-eminence even in affection; but so earnestly, that fellow-servants could not refuse the avowal which sufficed for the Master. So, in correcting any fault, in pointing it out, in trying to cure it, nay, in forgiving it, there is need for holy skill and tenderness.

II. A second lesson is the Saviour's wisdom in the selection of His agency. In that same apostolic band there was another to whom we might have expected that the Lord would have said, rather than to Peter, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep." Yet, although John is the disciple whom the brethren love and whom the Saviour loved, in the work of planting the Church, and first preaching the Gospel, he was not put forward like that other who made so many false steps, and who had been repeatedly rebuked for his rashness.

III. When their Master's need was at the sorest, none of the disciples acted out and out the part of the noblest and most self-devoting friendship; but there were two whose fall is most conspicious, the one having betrayed Him, the other having, with oaths and execrations, repudiated all connection with Him. Both fell, but the one fell to rise no more; the other was not only recovered, but fully reinstated in the confidence of his brethren and in the favour of his Lord. What made the difference? It arose from this: there never was a time when Judas really loved his Master; Peter did. The mere professor of religion may fall and never be recovered. But if you can answer to the demand of Christ, "Yea Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," His long-suffering mercy will not only pardon, but cure you; your diseases will be healed, your soul will be restored in the paths of righteousness, and you will be upheld by the Lord whom you follow. J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. i., p. 241.

References: xxi. 1.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 13th series, p. 149. xxi. 1, 2.—C. Stanford, *From Calvary to Olivet*, p. 235.

Chap. xxi., vers. 1-14.

I. It had been by a miraculous draught of fishes, like the one now before us, that, at the outset of His ministry, Christ had drawn away three at least of the seven now around Him, from their old occupations, and taught them to understand that in following Him they were to become fishers of men. Why was that miracle repeated? Because the lesson which it enforced was needed to be again given and enforced. Now that, bereft of the companionship of Christ, deprived of the means of support, if not driven by necessity, yet tempted by opportunity, they resume their ancient calling, was it not needful and kind in Jesus to interfere, and by the repetition of that miracle, whose symbolic meaning they could not fail at once to recognise, to teach them that their first apostolic calling still held good, that still the command was upon them: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men?"

II. The two miracles were substantially the same. Yet there were differences between them, perhaps indicative that the one, the earlier miracle, was meant to shadow forth the first formation; the latter miracle, the future and final ingathering of the Church. In the first instance, Christ was Himself in the vessel; in the second, He stood upon the shore. In the first the nets began to break and the ship to sink; in the second, nothing of the kind occurred. It may be a fancy to see in these and other diversities, the distinction between the present and visible effects of the casting forth of the gospel net upon the sands of time, and that landing and ingathering of the redeemed upon the shores of eternity. Treat this idea as we may, the image is a scriptural one, that both individually with Christians, or collectively with the Church, the present scene of things is the night of toil, through whose watches, whether fruitful or not of immediate and apparent good, we have to labour on, in hope of a coming dawn, when upon the blessed shores we shall hail the sight of the risen Lord, and share with Him in partaking of the provisions of a glorious immortality.

W. Hanna, *The Forty Days*, p. 108.

References: xxi. 1-3.—B. F. Westcott, *Revelation of the Risen Lord*, p. 111. xxi. 1-14.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 144.

Chap. xxi., ver. 3.—"That night they caught nothing."

I. The lot of Christ's disciples is usually a life of toil. In this, there is little difference between the Christian and the worldling; if anything, the difference is in the worldling's favour.

The Christian is constrained to keep the king's highway, the beaten path of industry and straightforward honesty, and cannot shorten the journey by leaping fences, or trying an occasional near-cut through his neighbour's property. An omnipotent Master might have emancipated His servants from drudgery, but His wisdom—or, what is the same thing—His kindness, has judged that it is not good for man to be idle.

II. The toil of the disciple is not always successful. If for probationary purposes Infinite Wisdom has refused to make the Church on earth a playground or pleasure-ground, for the same reason He has refused to make it the infallible avenue to worldly wealth, the sure and certain passport to earthly rank or renown. A ship manned by good Christians, a concern in which none are embarked but disciples, may toil all night and catch nothing.

III. Of this calamity the great Eye is witness, and with this bitter grief the great Heart sympathises. It is not willingly or wilfully that He sends such an affliction; and as this incident teaches, if we take the Master's bidding, we shall yet be gainers by this loss; for this delay or disappointment we shall at last be all the richer. Had that throw of the net brought nothing from the lake, the Master had a meal prepared already on the land. So take His bidding, ply your calling, and if that calling fails to yield you food and raiment, you may fearlessly cast yourself on that all-embracing care and kindness by which the ravens are fed and the lilies are clothed.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. i., p. 252.

REFERENCES: xxi. 3.—G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 148; Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 285; J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat*, p. 213. xxi. 3-6.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 239. xxi. 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 227; M. Dix, *Sermons, Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 108. xxi. 5.—J. N. Norton, *Old Paths*, p. 267. xxi. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 443; T. Birkett Dover, *The Ministry of Mercy*, p. 214.

Chap. xxi., ver. 7.—"Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord."

I. A WEARY night, but Christ came in the morning. So at first we are apt to say; but it would be putting it more correctly if we said that Christ, who had been present all the night, allowed Himself to be seen in the morning. He was now risen from the dead, and had put on that glorious body which evades our grosser sense, and needs an act of will to make it visible.

II. A Saviour habitually recollected and realised was the distinctive feature of apostolic piety; not to the eye-witnesses alone, but to all who believed their testimony, and to whom the Holy

Ghost revealed the things of Jesus, Christ was ever present—the spectator of their conduct, the guardian of their path, the president of their home, the light of the dungeon, the solace of earth, the attraction to heaven. And we cannot read the writings or the record of their lives without feeling that of their Christianity the keynote was struck on occasions like this, perhaps this very morning; and whether feeding the sheep or following the Master, whether toiling for a maintenance or catching men, we cannot but admire the simplicity and grandeur, the seriousness and happiness, in their deportment so blended, as of those who had never quite forgotten the sweet surprise at the Lake of Galilee, and to whom it might any moment again be whispered: "It is the Lord."

III. We need not toil with dejected looks and drowsy eyes, for close at hand is One who can in a moment fill the net, and who, even if the net were continuing empty, can still feed the fishermen. As soon as the disciples were come to land, they saw that it was not for His own sake, but theirs, that Christ had asked: "Have ye any meat?" and although He allowed them to make their own addition to the banquet, they saw that, even if they had continued to catch nothing, their Master would not have suffered them to starve. Let us learn to trust in Him who can prepare a table in the wilderness, and who, when His people have been forced to acknowledge, "We have nothing of our own," loves to surprise them with the invitation, "Come and dine."

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. i., p. 263.

I. THEY only see aright who see Christ in everything. This word of John's, "It is the Lord," ought (1) to be the conviction with the light of which we go out to the examination of all events, and to the consideration of all the circumstances of our earthly life. (2) It is the only conviction that is adequate either to explain or to make tolerable the circumstances of our earthly condition. (3) It should guide us in all our thoughts about the history and destinies of mankind and of Christ's Church.

II. Only they who love, see Christ. John, the apostle of love, knew Him first. There is no way of knowing a person except love. "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons preached in Manchester*, 2nd series, p. 183.

REFERENCES: xxi. 7.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 316; J. Keble, *Sermons for Saints' Days*, p. 68; J. Fraser, *University Sermons*, p. 123. xxi. 10-25.—Parker, *Christian Commonwealth*, vol. vii., p. 143.

Chap. xxi., ver. 12.—"Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine," etc.

I. THE Recognition. Three things contributed to it. (1) The love. Who, but One, so busies Himself about His redeemed? (2) The wisdom. Who, but One, could know or even dare to advise upon a matter to all appearance so casual and so fortuitous? (3) The strength. The fish were not there till Christ spoke. He, the Lord of creation, brought them to the net.

II. The entertainment. The recognition has brought together the Host and the guests. So at His table Christ Himself is spiritually present to receive, as well as to communicate, that highest joy, which is the interchange of conscious feeling and trusted love; to partake of us, as we of Him—He making us fit to give Him pleasure—He bringing the fish to our net—He preparing also the fire and the bread, which we are to find ready for us on the shore.

III. The feeling. "None of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord." Why should they ask, if they knew? Such questioning would have been intrusive, would have been familiar, would have been impertinent. They must wait for Him to speak now. So the feeling which reigns around Christ's table should be a feeling of predominant reverence.

IV. The conversation. Let us learn from Christ's example what to commune about with Jesus. (1) Who shall not begin with his sins? Who can doubt that Peter's three denials were uppermost in his heart at this meal? (2) Ask the Lord, in token of His forgiveness, to give you back your forfeited work for Him. Ask Him to let you be at least His hired servant. (3) At that table you cannot help forecasting your future. Shadows of the long hereafter, even of this life's hereafter, project themselves upon your path. They did so upon Peter's. Talk to Christ of your future, of your life, of your end. Tell that which you fear; let Him converse on it with you at His own table, and you shall find its worse sorrow healed, when He says to you in all, through all, notwithstanding all, "Follow Me." (4) Peter, finally, had a thought for others. He had a friend, a dear friend, dear also to Jesus Christ. Ask this night also concerning your friend. He may bid you not ask. He may bid you leave in His hands, your friend's future as your own, but He will not reprove you for asking. Such topics are suitable for the soul's communing with its beloved.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 33.

REFERENCES: xxi. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 633;

Spurgeon, Morning by Morning, p. 290; W. Morison, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 168; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 365.

Chap. xxi., ver. 15.—**"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" etc.**

THE last Scene with Peter.

I. Every one has felt that the threefold question of Christ to Peter, alluded to the threefold betrayal. There lay in the question a mild rebuke, so exquisitely given that it would not sting, but soften the heart. It was a trial also; it was so spoken as to try whether the apostle had the same boastful spirit. Would he now exalt himself, put himself forward as the first? Was the element of self-conceit still mingled with his impulsive affection? We see in the reply how the apostle was changed. He accepted the reproof without a word of self-justification. He answered true to the testing power of the words on his heart. He did not even trust his own knowledge of his love, but appealed from himself to Christ. "Thou knowest, only Thou, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

II. "Follow Me." This links the first interview by the lake with the last. As it was said, Peter looked round, and there lay the lake, its waves dancing in the morning light. The nets were on the sand, the multitude of fishes were glittering in them; the boats were drawn up upon the shore; his partners were again by his side, and Jesus had come upon them. It was the same scene he had seen before when he said, in his impulse, that he was a sinful man. Nature was the same; she who is always the same in the midst of our stormiest change; but in all else she was different. Peter looked back, and an eternity seemed to roll between the first meeting and this last. The confession of sin he had then made was true, but it was that of an untried child; nor did he know how true it was. Since then he had known what it was to be tried, to fail, to touch the depths of miserable guilt and human weakness. He had passed through a tempest, and he was now a man. He had at the first meeting given up all, in quick impulse, and gone after Christ, in admiration and enthusiasm. But his love had no foundation on a rock, only on the shifting sands of human feeling; and when the wind and rain arose, the fair house fell. Now he knew that love meant, not the momentary rush of quick delight alone, but the steady direction of his whole being towards the will and wish of One who had redeemed him from an abyss of failure, who had forgiven him a base betrayal; not the passionate thought now and again of the person loved, in gusts

of imagination, but that deep-rooted love which, having woven its fibres through every power of character, would never let him dream of following any other Master.

S. A. BROOKE, *The Spirit of the Christian Life*, p. 15.

REFERENCES: xxi. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1684; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 163; S. Greg, *A Layman's Legacy*, p. 129; A. Jessopp, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 193.

Chap. xxi., vers. 15-17.—"Feed My sheep," etc.

NOTICE—

I. The connection of two things: "Lovest thou Me," "Feed My sheep." It is love to the Saviour which has been the secret of each successful ministry. It is this which makes the patient and long-suffering Teacher put up with the waywardness, the selfishness, the ingratitude and inattention of His scholars; and it is this which made Peter himself and Paul so gentle and much-enduring among converts, very quarrelsome and carnal, very crude and un-Christlike; for even amongst these wild sheep might be lambs of Christ's fold.

II. Peter and his colleagues were evangelists. It was part of their vocation to bring into the fold the sheep not yet gathered—the wild and unreclaimed. But they were also pastors. That is to say, it was their business to provide for the flock food convenient—food for the sheep, food for the lambs. As tastes are so various, and as in the same audience there is great variety of capacity, and feeling, and circumstances, the wise steward, in dispensing the Word of Life, will seek to suit each want and emergency. Happy the minister who can say with the Apostle, "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God."

III. The providing of food convenient is not, however, the whole of the pastoral office, whether that pastorate be parental, ministerial, or prophetic. One part of the shepherd's work was to go out and in before the flock. If he was a good shepherd, the sheep got fond of him, and came to know his very voice. They liked him and trusted him, and as they had no fear of his leading them to poisonous pastures or dangerous places; they went out and in, and followed him. Quite as important as instruction is example; and he alone is a good shepherd who, not content with telling the road to heaven, leads the way. He alone is a good shepherd who is full of sympathy and tenderness, binding up that which is broken, and strengthening that which was feeble. He alone is a good shepherd who feels as a personal sorrow the inconsistencies and declensions of believers;

and who, if one were wandering, would leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. i., p. 292.

REFERENCES: xxi. 15-17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 117; A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 519; G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, pp. 236, 252. xxi. 15-18.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 51. xxi. 15-19.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 266; B. F. Westcott, *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*, p. 127; A. Mackennal, *Christ's Healing Touch*, p. 171.

Chap. xxi., vers. 15-22.

PETER'S Restoration.

I. The question is about love. It carries in it a thorough assurance of the forgiveness of sin and the healing of backsliding; coming as it does from Him whom the sin has pierced, and the backsliding grieved afresh. It is the question of the injured Friend and the grieved Brother. It is He who still, in spite of all, Himself answering for all, puts the question, "Lovest thou Me."

II. The question is about the degree of Peter's love. Why should Peter be expected to love Jesus more than others? Why, but because he is forgiven more? So Peter feels now as he never felt it before.

III. The question is thrice repeated. How did Peter feel when subjected to this triple questioning? To a mind like his it must have been somewhat trying. Accordingly it is said that Peter was grieved.

IV. In all the three instances in which the question is put, the answer is followed up by the command, "Feed My lambs"; "Feed My sheep." Feed My sheep: There is an obvious propriety in this. On the one hand, the question is a fitting preliminary to the command; on the other hand, the command is a fitting sequel to the question.

V. How changed, as regards the whole matter of suffering with and for Jesus, is the high-minded and high-spirited apostle. He is high-minded and high-spirited still, in a right sense and on a right footing. But it is towards men, not towards the Lord. He loved Jesus before; warmly, strongly, boldly. Now he simply waits. He receives the command, "Feed My sheep," and the warning as to the death by which he is to glorify God, in meek and dumb acquiescence. It is the acquiescence of one who is now brought thoroughly to feel that he is nothing, and that Jesus is all in all.

VI. The Lord crowns the whole conversation with the call, *Follow Me.* Follow Me, in the following up and following out

of that work with reference to which I said that thou couldst not follow Me once. Follow Me now, as loving Me and prepared to feed My sheep; and to die with Me now; nor consider thy lot hard if thou shouldst have to glorify God by a bloody death, and thy beloved friend should tarry, if I will, till I come. "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

R. S. CANDLISH, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 96.

REFERENCES: xxi. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1281; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 308; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 271; W. F. Hook, *Sermons on the Miracles*, vol. ii., p. 262; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 257; J. Vaughan, *Children's Sermons*, 5th series, p. 127.

Chap. xxi., ver. 17.—**"Peter was grieved, because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee," etc.**

WE have here three points; love's examination, love's answer, and love's evidence; and we purpose to look at these three points of love in their order.

I. Observe then, first, what Christ did not do with Peter. Christ did not examine Peter continually all his life, as to the state of his heart; but upon a distinct occasion, for a distinct object. There was nothing subtle, and metaphysical, and perplexing in our Saviour's mode of examining Peter's heart. He did not wind His probe about. He was simple, straightforward, and definite. He went to the point where pain began—He made Peter grieve, and then He pressed it no further. From His example we gather the occasions for examination to be: (1) When we have lapsed into any known sin. (2) In a time of affliction. (3) Before any great enterprise. (4) At sacred festivals. (5) At particular anniversaries.

II. Love's answer. "Peter was grieved." I do not suppose he knew that that very grief was the answer. Peter appealed to the omniscience of Christ. It is always best to find the harbingers of peace more in God's mind than in your own mind. And it is evident that this thought was the mainstay of Peter's assurance; for the more he seemed to be doubted, the greater stress he laid upon it. A wicked man does not dare to think of God's omniscience. He is always afraid of the thought; he cowers at it. But to the Christian, it is a thought with all strength and all peace—"God knows everything."

III. Love's evidence. "Feed My lambs," "Feed My sheep." Actions must always be the heart's language. Be suspicious of

the reality of any feeling which has never gone out in an action. Painstaking, faithful, hard work is the bent of a full heart, without which the feelings will grow, first restless, then oppressed, and then dying. Love will work. It only wants opportunity, and opportunity is always given. For wherever God, by His Spirit, has given the desire to work in the heart, He always, by providence, opens the door. The branch that bears no fruit can never have been grafted. The love which does not act, cannot live.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 352.

I. LOVE to the Lord Jesus is the essence of religion. If you have it not—if the Lord Jesus is no friend of yours, we cannot promise you much happiness in the present life; for the best happiness is to be found in Him to whom you still are a stranger. And with yourself there must be something radically wrong. So excellent is the Lord Jesus and so suited to our need, that most reasonably and righteously God the Father employs Him as a test or touchstone of the sons of men.

II. It is love—it is the opening of the heart to God's good will, which draws back to Himself that heart in grateful devotion and tender affiance. The love of God you cannot overrate, nor from its infinite well-spring drink too largely. "God is love," and to believe that love, of which the sinless creation is the boundless sphere, and of which Calvary is the focus concentrated, the bright and burning expression—to believe that it is not a cold law, a dark fate, a sombre power, in which you live and move and have your being; but to believe that it is God's great life which now encircles and will eternally enclasp your little life—to believe that a Being most wise, most holy, hovers round your daily path—to get grace to believe this, is to learn the lesson which the Incarnate Word was constantly teaching, and the faith of which gave to John and his brethren their fulness of joy.

III. If you, too, would be happy, learn to love. View God as He reveals Himself. Believe Him to be what Jesus said; believe Him to be what Jesus was. When any mercy or any happy moment comes, remember the pleasant truth—God Himself is near. And just as your little child wakes up, and finds a present on his pillow and shouts forth his wonder and his thanks; so when, through no labour of your hands, through no procurement or desert of yours, there comes to you some good and perfect gift, you cry, "Thanks be to God, through

Jesus Christ. My heavenly Father has been here, for it is thus He giveth to His beloved in their sleep."

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. i., p. 276.

WE may Learn a Lesson—

I. From the words and demeanour of our Lord in this simple narrative. How tender and considerate He was in all He here said. We too have to do with Jesus, and we have no reason to fear that He will deal more harshly with us than He did with His penitent disciple. He is full of compassion. Man may reproach us, load us with bitter words, delight in our anguish; but Jesus never reproaches, or if He seems to do so, His words are full of love as well as of chastisement. Man may strike wantonly, and strike again when we are down, and follow it up to our ruin; but our Saviour does not so. He wounds only as the physician wounds, that He may heal. His wounds are to question our love, and not that He needs to enquire into it, but that we may enquire into it, and prove ourselves, and test the reality of our love for Him. Such reminding are but the crook of the chief Shepherd, bringing back His sheep that they go not astray.

II. And from the penitent apostle too, we may learn: First, his humility. He casts himself simply on his Lord. He knew what a broken reed self was to lean upon. He had once trusted to himself; he had sown in self-confidence, and had reaped tears and shame. And have we not too had some sad experience of the same kind? Have we never gone forth champions and returned traitors? Have we never spoken as if we would stand for Christ against an army, and then fled at the sight of a foe? Let us not be drawing highly-coloured pictures to ourselves of our devotedness, our faith, our love, exalting ourselves, to be abased; but rather simply renounce all self-esteem and boasting, and fly for our refuge to "Lord, thou knowest." Dismiss bye ends and double purposes; give up the fruitless and disappointing attempt to serve the world and God at the same time; though in weakness and fear, and in self-abasement, yet in singleness of purpose cleave to the blessed Jesus. Thus will His questionings and His chastisements not be in vain if they knit your hearts to Him.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 317.

REFERENCES: xxi. 17.—J. M. McCulloch, *Sermons*, p. 183; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 245. xxi. 18.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 229; M. Dix, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 120; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 134.

Chap. xxi., vers. 18, 19.—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest," etc.

THE warning of what awaited him, which the Lord here gave to Peter, was divinely adapted to his peculiar cast of mind, and in conjunction with the words, "Follow Me," was fitted at once to console and solemnise the apostle.

I. "When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself." Rapidity and self-reliance have always been your way. "But"—and there must have been something in the way in which this was spoken which conveyed a peculiar import, for it was at once understood as predicting to Peter a death like Christ's own—"But when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee," etc. And whilst we can quite believe that to the eager disciple, so full of revenge at himself and of devotion to his Lord, there was at this fervid moment joy in the prospect of being conformed to Christ in His crucifixion, in conjunction with all that had occurred, it was a sobering consideration that the days of freedom and self-disposal were about to be succeeded by days of captivity and a death of violence.

II. But by that death he should glorify God. It is a singular history, older than the time of Peter, as old, we may say, as the death of Abel, and accounted for by man's mournful antipathy to God's holiness and God's truth; in this world of ours, when any stands out from his fellows severely loyal to his God, that constant tendency to exclaim: "Away with such a fellow from the earth"—that perpetual effort to extirpate unwelcome truth by slaying and burying out of sight the witness-bearer. Yet in all these martyrdoms God is glorified. We wonder how weak humanity survived such tragedies; and as we think of all whom the headsman's axe left widows, and all whom inquisitorial terrors hunted from their homes, and try to estimate that long agony by which a martyr Church has maintained its testimony, we begin to appreciate the awful privilege assigned to Peter and to the myriads who, like him, have trod in the Master's bleeding track since that morning when, stretching forth His own pierced hands, Jesus said to the apostle, "Follow Me."

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. i., p. 304.

REFERENCE: xxi. 18, 19.—E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 227. xxi. 18-23.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 173.

Chap. xxi., ver. 19.

FOLLOW Christ.

I. You shall never be far from the Father. That pleasant countenance with which the Father beheld the well-beloved Son

extends to all His followers—to all who, in faith and affection, gather round Him or go after Him, like this little band beside the Lake of Galilee.

II. You will learn to do things as Christ did them. You will learn to feed the sheep or the lambs as He fed them; warning, reproving, exhorting, with a kindred long-suffering. You will learn to be calm amidst astounding insult; and what is harder still, you will learn to be kind to most unattractive misery. You will learn to meet temptation with "Thus it is written," and for trial you will learn to prepare by praying more earnestly.

III. Christ will conduct you where no other can take you. I do not mean merely in that better life to which He is the only entrance; but in this present world there are heights of attainment and regions of joy which are only reached in His company. As you follow on you will come to know Him better and to trust Him more, and you will at last find yourself looking down on earthly cares and solicitudes, on tumults of the people and national commotions, from heights such as the mere sage or statesman never scaled.

IV. Christ will take you up where all others leave you. One by one the companions of the pilgrimage drop off and disappear. And at last that mysterious summit will be reached where the rest can come no further; and as one by one the senses close, as in the thick fog dear faces fade away, and as far down the strand fond and familiar voices cease to overtake you, a countenance that you have never seen before, and which you yet know full well, will say, as plainly as the Supreme of Loveliness can say, "It is I, be not afraid"; and so with gladness and rejoicing shall you be brought into the palace of the King, and there you shall abide.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. i., p. 339.

THE best token of attachment and loyalty to Christ is to follow Him fully. Try to give such a representation of His religion as will be true to Himself and appropriate to your own position, and then it cannot fail to be attractive and impressive to others.

I. Among those features of the great Example which all may study and seek to assimilate, let me mention first, His sublime veracity. He was Himself the Truth, the Amen, the great Reality, whom it was impossible to know too thoroughly, or trust too entirely; and whilst from His own mouth guile never proceeded, there never was a presence in which affectations and hypocrisies felt so uncomfortable—gasping and out of their

element, and like to give up the ghost. In order to have the mind of Christ we must share His truthfulness.

II. Again, Jesus Christ hath left us a pattern in His kindness. Himself the Son of God incarnate, and crowning three years of the busiest beneficence by a deed of mercy, whose influence eternity cannot exhaust, and whose outgoings are felt in all worlds, one lesson of His life is the amount of consolation and encouragement and holy impulse which can be diffused from a single presence in its progress through one short day, when there are no conflicting elements—when the fountain never intermits, when the light is never veiled.

III. Follow Christ in that wonderful faculty which turned every opportunity to the best account. If there be a frightful contagion in evil, there is in faith and earnestness a Divine ascendancy. One serious thinker can do much to arrest frivolity, even as one cheerful countenance can go far to brighten a gloomy company—even as one high-toned spirit can go far to raise to his own level a large assembly.

IV. Follow Christ in His humility. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself and made Himself of no reputation." Whether it be in Christ or the Christian, there is in true humility nothing abject, nothing self-disparaging; on the other hand, there is affability, there is self-forgetfulness, there is contentment, there is submission to God's will, there is cheerful, unquestioning obedience. And this meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. i., p. 346.

REFERENCES: xxi. 19-22.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 528. xxi. 19-35.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 349.

Chap. xxi., ver. 20.—**"Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following," etc.**

I. As we apprehend the character of John, the first thing which strikes us is a peculiar intuition. That great sight, God dwelling in the midst of men, was early disclosed to this pure-hearted beholder, and through the rest of life he seems never to have lost the open vision. "With his loving gaze fixed upwards upon the Light of Life, his own eye has become light; the sun has made it sunlike."

II. Ingenuousness and intuition are near allied; the pure heart, the open eye. From the time that the Baptist exclaimed "Behold the Lamb of God," it would seem as if John had no longer toiled at the task which some of us find so troublesome—

the task of taking away our own sins—but had rested in sweet security, satisfied with a Divine Redeemer and Reconciler, and at leisure to observe those gracious words and wonderful works which showed so plainly the Father.

III. Open, receptive, unpreoccupied, John's was that attitude of mind which, at the disclosure of Incarnate Deity rejoicing with exceeding joy, was prepared to sustain without stumbling the unveiling of an awful as well as glorious future. Of the two types of piety—the active and the contemplative—Peter and John may be taken as patterns; and as both conformations exist in society, it is a cause of rejoicing that there is room for both in the Church of Christ. The side of John is that on which few of us are likely to exceed. We are more ready to work than to worship—more anxious to hear some new thing than to realise the all-important things with which we are already familiar. In the dust of our own bustle we veil the heaven, and we run so fast that we cannot read. It is God's goodness, therefore, that He gives us leisure, and our seclusion will be a blessed banishment if we are led to a more intimate communion with that Saviour who, oft forgotten, is never far away.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. i., p. 316.

REFERENCES: xxi. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1539; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 250; T. L. Cuyler, *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 91; vol. v., p. 433; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 347; *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 31. xxi. 20-22.—R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters and Miscellanies*, pp. 250, 264; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 415. xxi. 20-23.—B. F. Westcott, *Revelation of the Risen Lord*, p. 141.

Chap. xxi., ver. 21.—**"Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?"**

IT is the language of devout inquiry. A friend is inquiring into a friend's future. To this inquiry he sets no bounds but one, and this is implied rather than expressed. It is implied that the friend is to be a servant of Jesus Christ. Peter has just been shown, as in a mirror, the outline of his own future, and he puts the natural question touching a comrade, whom perhaps he feels to be greater than himself, "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

I. When you ask for your friend, "What shall this man do?" when your heart travels forth with him over the mountain-tops of fame, till you lose sight of him in the mist and the distance; when, in the fulness of a comrade's affection, you strive to help

him with your prayers; then covet for him earnestly the better, the supernatural gifts. Pray that he may never lose his love for the poor and simple—never relax the fervency of his prayers—never dream, or, if he cannot wholly avoid the dream, at least never confound it with waking certainties—that either common sense, or moral philosophy, or metaphysics has spoken the last word on the mysteries of Calvary, or the power of the Resurrection.

II. "Lord, what shall this man do?" Take this thought with you till it becomes a rule, a standard, by which you gauge success. Apply it to others, apply it to yourselves. In choosing your life's career will you, even in your conceptions of good, be worldly? Will you weigh everything beforehand but God? Or will your vision of what a man, of what a friend, of what your own life shall do, include as a necessary ingredient the service of the Lord Jesus Christ? Will His mind be your mind, His causes your causes? We ask the question; the future hides the answer.

H. M. BUTLER, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Jan. 22nd, 1880.

Chap. xxi., vers. 21, 22.

THE Individuality of Christian Life.

I. God appoints a course of life for each individual Christian. "Lord, what shall this man do?" "What is that to thee?" No words could mark more emphatically the great difference which was henceforth to exist between the paths of those two men, who had hitherto followed Christ side by side. They seem to express a kind of impassable solitude, in which each man was to live. John could not lead the life of Peter; Peter could not fulfil the destiny of John. In different and lonely ways they were each to travel till the end should come. The life of Peter was to be action crowned by suffering; the life of John, a patient waiting for the manifestation of Christ,—there, in the difference between labouring and watching, lay the difference in their respective courses. Thus, to each class of men, to each infinitely varied soul, the path of life is divinely adapted.

II. Believing in a divinely ordered course, the question comes: By what rule is that course fulfilled? By what means are we to detect our path? The answer comes in Christ's own words: "Follow thou Me." That simple command guides us all. To follow Christ is, like Him, to obey whenever God's will is clear, to be patient like Him when it is dark. And this is a rule which applies to *all* circumstances, and one which can be obeyed in

defiance of all results. Follow Christ in His perfect, unmurmuring obedience; and, as you follow, a fuller light will come. The command to Peter was a command to challenge all issues. Although "another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou wouldst not—follow thou Me."

III. We find in Christ's words to Peter the strength which will help us to fulfil our course. "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." It is the will of Christ which gives us power, for it implies knowledge of and sympathy with us. In another part of the gospel Christ says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." There we have the picture of feeble human life, elevated, strengthened, shielded from danger, and guided into repose by the ever-watchful sympathy of the strong Son of God.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 230.

WE have here—

I. The revelation of the risen Christ as the Lord of life and death, in that majestic "If I will." In His charge to Peter, Christ had asserted His right absolutely to control His servant's conduct and fix his place in the world, and His power at least to foresee and forecast his destiny and his end. But in these words He goes a step further. "I will that he tarry." To communicate life and to sustain life is a Divine prerogative; to act by the bare utterance of His will upon physical nature is a Divine prerogative. And Jesus Christ here claims that His will goes out with sovereign power amongst the perplexities of human history, and into the depths of that mystery of life; and that He, the Son of Man, quickens whom He will, and has power to kill and to make alive. The words would be absurd, if not something worse, upon any but Divine lips, that opened with conscious authority, unless their utterer knew that His hand was laid upon the innermost springs of being.

II. The service of patient waiting. "If I will that he tarry, what is that to thee?" Christ's charge to John to tarry did not only, as his brethren misinterpreted it, mean that his life was to be continued, but it prescribed the manner of his life. It was to be patient contemplation—a dwelling in the house of the Lord; a keeping of his heart still, like some little tarn amongst the silent hills, for heaven with all its blue to mirror itself in. In all times of the world's history that form of Christian service needs to be pressed upon busy people. The men who are to keep the freshness of their Christian zeal, and of the consecration

which they will ever feel is being worn away by the attrition even of faithful service, can only renew and refresh it by resorting again to the Master, and imitating Him who prepared Himself for a day of teaching in the Temple by a night of communion on the Mount of Olives.

III. The lesson of patient acquiescence in the Master's undisclosed will. The error into which the brethren of the apostle fell, as to the meaning of the Lord's words, was a very natural one, especially when taken with the commentary which his unusually protracted life seemed to append to it. John did not know exactly what his Master meant. He acquiesces quietly in the certainty that it shall be as his Master wills. The calm acceptance of His will, and patience with Christ's "If," is the reward of tarrying in silent communion with Him.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, April 23rd, 1885.

REFERENCES: xxi. 21, 22.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 265; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 307; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 365.

Chap. xxi., ver. 22.—**"Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me."**

I. IT is not to be supposed for a moment that our Lord meant in these words to pronounce any distinct intention concerning John. The very force of the sentence lies in its indistinctness. One of two meanings, however, He must have had: either that He might, if He chose, prolong St. John's life to the Second Advent; or that St. John should, as indeed he did, survive that event which, because it was both such a manifestation of Christ's power, and such an earnest and type of His last Advent, was often called Christ's coming—the taking of Jerusalem and the setting up of the Christian Church. But, under either aspect, the Lord's reproof will alike apply to those, whoever they be, who are drawn into speculative views of unfulfilled prophecy. The thought of our Lord's coming must always be the real horizon in every believer's prospect. Is it not the bright, the redeeming point, in all the future, for the sake of which we may begin to lift up our heads, "because we know that our redemption draweth nigh?"

II. On former occasions, when our Lord had said, "Follow Me," He had always prefixed the words, "Take up thy cross." It did not need it now. For Christ had taken up His cross before all men, and no one could think of following Him without

taking up a cross. Indeed, the whole command was one that suited well to the time when it was spoken—when Jesus was just about to leave the earth. He could point back from where He stood to that whole life, and say of every step, what no one else could ever say of every step of any life—"Follow Me." We hear His words, like the last accent of a dying saint. We hear them, like the challenge of a departed conqueror. "Follow thou Me." Begin, begin at once. Lay some foundation deep. Live more in communion with God. Cast blessings as you go. Live dyingly, that you may die livingly. Keep the valley, that you may ascend the height. "Follow thou Me."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 182.

I. WHAT is to be understood by following Christ? In this is manifestly summed up the whole character of a Christian; and perhaps it would be impossible to find any language so well fitted to convey a clear and practical impression of what a Christian ought to be as these words do. The follower of Christ must (1) be of one spirit with his Master; (2) he must make Christ's work his work; (3) he must habitually endeavour to imitate Him or to be like Him; (4) he must separate himself from the sinful pursuits of the world; (5) he must bear the cross.

II. What is the frame of spirit in which Christ is to be followed? (1) He must be followed with the most implicit faith; (2) with the most submissive humility.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 41.

MISPLACED ANXIETY.

Look—

I. At the mysteries which lie outside of revelation altogether. We cannot unravel the perplexities of Providence, but we can see the way of life, which Christ has made so plain that no one can mistake it. Shall we, then, turn away from the pressing duty of the present state, and the open gate which Jesus has set before us, and give up our energies to such futile guests as Solomon has described in the Book of Ecclesiastes? Do not brood over mysteries. Follow rather in the footsteps of Him who came to earth, not to make all perplexities plain, but to mitigate the miseries, and soothe the sorrows, and remove the sin of men.

II. The mysteries which spring out of revelation. Mystery is inseparable from a revelation given by a higher to a lower

intelligence. It is not required of us to understand the infinite. Only God can comprehend God. What we are commanded to do is to follow Christ. That is within our power; that is on the plane of our daily finite existence. That, therefore, we ought to do at once, and with all our hearts. Leave off questioning about these matters which are too high for you, these things which God has kept in His own power. They are of no practical importance to you. Follow Christ, and very soon to you also will come that repose of spirit which lies upon the height of faith.

III. The contingencies of the future. We are all prone to pry into the years that are to come, and many are the misplaced anxieties we cherish regarding them. Sometimes we are solicitous about ourselves. We cannot see what is to become of us amid the losses and crosses that have come upon us. And if we have no such cause for apprehension, we torment ourselves about others; or we fear for the future of the Church or of the nation. Now, to all these misgivings about the future, we have but one answer, and that is furnished by the principle of my text. The future is not ours; the present is. We are responsible for the present, and not for the future, except only as it shall be affected by the present. Nay, we shall best serve the future, and secure it from those evils which we fear, by doing with our might the work of the present, and leaving the issue with our God. Your individual duty is to follow Christ in every matter that comes before you, and let no carking care for what is merely problematical unfit you for going whole-heartedly into that which is clearly the work of the hour.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Limitations of Life*, p. 63.

REFERENCES: xxi. 22.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 365; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 271; J. Vaughan, *Three Hundred Outlines from the New Testament*, p. 105; *Ibid., Sermons*, 1869, p. 220; Tyng, *American Pulpit of the Day*, vol. i., p. 448. xxi. 25.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iii, p. 241; G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 1.

Chap. xxi.

WE Learn from this Chapter—

I. The wide range of the pastoral office. Whenever the minister is exclusively a fisherman and neglects the labour of the shepherd, he is only doing half his work. He is like a man in a boat who seeks to propel it with one oar, and who succeeds only in making it spin round in a ceaseless circle. He will make no progress, and his people will lack intelligence.

II. The true motive for Christian work, "Lovest thou Me?" The most potent principle in the Christian heart is love to Christ.

III. Difficulties about those things with which we have nothing to do ought not to keep us from performing the plain duty of following Christ. The practical, which lies before us, and for the accomplishment of which we shall be held responsible —that is for us the important thing.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Peter the Apostle*, p. 153.

THE ACTS.

Chap. 1., ver. 5.—**"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."**

I. WHAT is the baptism of the Holy Ghost? We are told that with an invisible power the Spirit should come down and rest upon the heart, cleansing and purifying the whole man, so that it can be said, "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature." This change is mysterious and in some respects inexplicable; but we find it produces union between God and the soul. When the baptism of the Holy Ghost comes to a Church; when it comes to a mass that are brought to the knowledge of Christ; when it comes to a community, as on the day of Pentecost, it seems to represent to us a shower of blessing, and we may well be glad when we commemorate that outpouring. But is it attainable by us now? Yes, we answer, and more than ever. This dispensation is called the dispensation of the Spirit.

II. What are some of the consequences that flow out of this baptism of the Holy Spirit? (1) One of the first is joy and peace. All the epistles are written with the pen of joy. The fulfilment of Christ's Word was theirs. (2) There will be a large accession spiritually to the Church of God. There is nothing else we want in the midst of this Christian people of England; nothing else will save the tens of thousands passing down to destruction; nothing will alter the condition of life which Christ declared to Nicodemus. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."

III. How is this attainable? We must secure it by prayer. God tells us throughout the whole of these Scriptures, where He promises the Spirit, that we can only receive it by prayer and supplication. Prayer and the consecration of our souls to the service of God—these are the conditions on which we shall receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost—"not many days hence."

J. FLEMING, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 456.

REFERENCES: i. 5.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 197.

Chap. i., ver. 6.—"When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?"

THE extent and the nature of the intercourse of the risen Lord with His disciples must ever be of the deepest interest to the Church. He was not in those forty days quite as He had been before. His theme was the same, but the tense was different. He could not now talk of His decease as a future event. The subject of much of His conversation seems to have been the unfolding of the prophecies of the ancient Scripture. He was Himself the proper theme of His own ministry. It was natural for the disciples to ask the question of the text. They had been longing, like all patriotic Jews, for the restoration of the glories of the house of Israel. Ancient prophecies, they knew, had foretold this restoration, and had always associated it with a great outpouring of the Spirit. Now that they had been expressly bidden to go to Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost, was it strange that they should ask, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

I. In their request several mistakes were involved. (1) They thought that national supremacy was synonymous with spiritual power. (2) They thought that the visible was the enduring. After their roving life they longed to be at home and at rest, and they thought that the restoration of the kingdom would mean for them a secure and permanent abode. (3) They thought that outward conformity was the same as inward unity. They forgot that outward conformity may be merely like the tie that binds a bundle of dry and lifeless faggots.

II. Our Lord's answer is a very remarkable one. They had asked for power, and He promises that they should be endued with power from on high. The times and seasons mattered little. What they needed was strength to be witnesses for Him. Stormy times were coming, when their strength would be sorely tried. Yet if ever the kingdom did come, it must be by the faithful efforts of faithful men.

H. E. STONE, Jan. 4th, 1891.

CONSIDER what is the nature of the power necessary to regenerate and save the human race.

I. Let us show what it is not. (1) We should sadly misunderstand the words of the Saviour did we attach to them the idea of physical power. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." (2) It is not miraculous

power. They were already endued with this, though no doubt a great increase was subsequently made to it. This was not the power the world stood principally in need of. Miraculous power cannot save men. We would rush to perdition through a battalion of ghosts. (3) Neither is it the power of eloquence. I admit there is tremendous power in words; they breathe, they burn, they move the soul. But there is one thing they cannot do—regenerate the soul. They are not adequate to do that. The power Christ promised His disciples was not the word power. (4) Neither is it the power of logic. It is trite and commonplace to say that argument cannot convert a soul. God can never save you by argument; the world will defy the Almighty in a debate. There is argument in the Bible; and argument is indispensable; but it is not by logic that men are made new creatures. The power that Christ promised His disciples is not that of logic. (5) It is not that of thought. I do not say that thought is not necessary; but it is not of itself adequate to bring about the desired change.

II. Consider the subject on its positive side. (1) This power which Christ promises to His disciples is "power from on high," a power which has its source in worlds above us. (2) It is "the power of the Holy Ghost." (3) Its effect was to make the disciples pre-eminently spiritual. (4) Its effect on the congregation is that many are turned to God, and are brought out of nature's darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel.

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 1.

THE power which accompanied the first missionaries of the Gospel and fitted them for a work which, to human eyes, must have seemed hopeless, is the power which works now for the accomplishment of the same ends. The external phenomena of that day have indeed ceased; the miracles are no more; the gift of tongues is but once or twice alluded to in the second century, and then we hear no more of it. But every minister of Christ, every missionary of the cross, must be clothed with the same power from on high which was imparted to the first Apostles, if he would carry on the work which they commenced. And what is the secret of that power? Where is it to be found? I answer, first in the knowledge of the truth, and next in the sanctification of the heart.

I. This power cannot exist apart from the knowledge of the truth and the love of the truth. "He shall guide you into all

truth," says our Lord. That is the most magnificent promise ever given to man, opening the brightest vista to human thought and aspiration, and fitted to fire the noblest minds with a worthy ambition. The whole truth into which the Apostles were to be led, and into which we are to be led, is the truth concerning Christ. It is in the knowledge of that truth that is to be found the secret of the power that gives life to the world.

II. But once more, this power is to be found in the virtue of a holy life, no less than in the knowledge and utterance of the truth. The Spirit of Truth is the Holy Spirit. And in His gracious work we may believe that He who enlightens the understanding to know the truth, does also purify the heart and sanctify the whole man. The power of a holy life is far more than the power of uttering the truth. You may not have the learning of an Origen, or the philosophical acuteness of an Augustine, or the fervid eloquence of a Chrysostom; but if you have been baptised with the Spirit of God, you must be a light wherever you are, you must be a life and a power in the world; there will stream forth from you, in your daily example, in your mortification of self, in your growing self-mastery, in your growing self-sacrifice, in your pureness, your charity, your patience, your meekness, your love; in a word, in your bright exhibition of all the graces of the Christian character, that *power* which of old subdued the world.

J. S. PEROWNE, *Sermons*, p. 205.

REFERENCES: i. 1, 2.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 295; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 32; A. Verran, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 397. i. 6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 272. i. 6, 7.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 37. i. 6, 8.—*New Outlines on the New Testament*, pp. 77, 79. i. 6-12.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 361. i. 7, 8.—J. R. Bailey, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 314; R. W. Church, *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 187. i. 1-8.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 536; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 130.

Chap. i., vers. 1-11 (with Luke xxiv., vers. 15-53).

ASCENSION Day.

I. It is quite necessary to seize firmly and hold fast by this thought, that the acts of Apostles and all subsequent acts of their true successors, are, as Bengel says, a continuation of Christ's own history, if we would understand St. Luke's opening section of Church history, or any after section of it from St. Luke's day till now. The one event in which St. Luke finds the meeting place of these two eras is the Ascension. It

finds a place at the end of his Gospel, and at the beginning of his Church history, because it is really common to both.

II. Unlike the feebleness of good wishes on men's dying lips, the strong benediction of the Prince of Life commands and confers a blessing, while from His radiant face and form, and down from His uplifted hands, there rains into the souls of the eleven a rain of gracious influences, of hope and courage and content and gladness. Then, like a thing of rarer quality, which by its own upward virtue ascends through the grosser atmosphere below, His blessed body rose with a still and slow and stately movement into the pure bright upper air. Nor stayed; but followed by the fixed gaze of the amazed men, rose on, until, still raining blessings down, He reached the region where white clouds rest. Then suddenly there swept beneath His feet a cloud that shut him from their envious eyes. This was no time for idle, melancholy despondencies, that root themselves in the past—for profitless longings after that which is not. Gazing into heaven will not fetch Christ back, nor any other departed. Let us return to Jerusalem. Earth has its calls to duty, and heaven will chide us if we do not heed them. Let this be the spur which quickens labour and the hope which cheers exhaustion, that "This same Jesus who is taken from us into heaven, shall so come in like manner as they saw Him go into heaven."

J. Oswald Dykes, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 5 (see also *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 1).

References: i. 1-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 266; i. 1-21.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 189. i. 2, 3.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 32. i. 3.—T. Binney, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 379; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ix., p. 468; *Homilist*, vol. iii., p. 615. i. 4.—Lawrance, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 123. i. 4, 5.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 33. i. 4-8.—*Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 267.

Chap. i., ver. 9.—**"And a cloud received Him out of their sight."**

Consider the obvious lessons which result at once from Christ's Ascension.

I. The first is heavenly-mindedness. He went but as the great forerunner of His people, and we must follow Him in His course; where the Head is, there should the members be; and our treasure, our life, our affection, are meant to be with Him at the right hand of God. Let us hear the cries that come to us from heaven above and from the earth beneath, from the works of nature and the voices of conscience, and from the

wail of the weary and from all the graves of men, the cry of *Sursum corda*, "Lift up your hearts;" and from every one of us let the answer be, "We lift them up unto the Lord."

II. The second lesson is a lesson of simple duty. It is the same plain and unvarnished and homely lesson which is taught in the fifteenth Psalm, "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill?" Is it only the lofty, the unapproachable, the devoted, the timely-happy? No, but common men who by God's grace have lived their common lives in the paths of purity and duty, the lowly, the undeceitful, the unmalicious, the uncorrupt. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall rise up in His holy place? Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart; he who doeth the thing which is right and speaketh the truth from his heart.

III. The third is a lesson of holy fear. If you be an impenitent and hardened sinner, and will continue impenitent and hardened still, then *fear;* for then to you the lesson of Christ's Ascension is a lesson of wrath and doom.

IV. But, lastly, if you be loving justice and mercy, and walking humbly with your God, if you be striving, however faintly, to be true and pure and good, then the lesson of the Ascension is a lesson of hope. It is a pledge to us of that forgiveness which Christ died to win. For Christ is our Intercessor. And therefore when we are summoned to the bar of God's judgment-seat, we may hope; for the soft rainbow, like unto an emerald, encircles it, and we have an Intercessor. Humble, yet unabashed, may we stand where the very seraphs must veil their faces with their wings, for He is by our side. With the thought of such an Intercessor as this, is not the lesson of the Ascension a lesson of infinite peace and hope?

F. W. FARRAR, *The Fall of Man*, p. 97

REFERENCES: i. 9.—S. Wilberforce, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 161; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ix., p. 140; F. W. Farrar, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 354; J. N. Norton, *Golden Truths*, p. 272; *Expository Sermons on the New Testament*, p. 127. i. 9-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv, p. 89; G. Moberly, *Plain Sermons at Brighstone*, p. 209; W. R. Savage, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 336; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. liii., p. 40. i. 10-11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1817; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. xi., pp. 126, 308; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 292. i. 11.—J. Keble, *Sermons on Various Occasions*, p. 85; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 272; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 271; vol. v., p. 452. i. 12, 13.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 29; W. M. Arthur, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 317. i. 12-14.—A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*,

p. 542; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 42. i. 13.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 155. i. 14.—*Ibid.*, p. 143; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 557; J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 330. i. 15-22.—*Ibid.*, p. 156. i. 15-26. —*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 99.

Chap. i., vers. 16, 17.—**"Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus," etc.**

THE Subserviency of Crime to the Purposes of God.

We are so accustomed to view the traitor Judas with indignation and denounce him for his crime and treachery, that we are apt to overlook the important ends which, as overruled by God, are eventually subserved.

I. As an attestation of the miracles of Christ, we think the treachery of Judas overruled for the lasting benefit of the Church. The traitor shall witness to the Master he betrayed. For had there been anything of luck or deception in the miracles of Jesus, Judas, we may be sure, would have known it and told it. This would have been a fine piece of intelligence to have sold to the chief priests, and by communicating it, he would at once have enriched himself and destroyed Christianity. Nay, he would have done a righteous deed; and while gratifying his avarice, he would have laid up no food for remorse. If suspicion may rest on the witness of those faithful ones who had bound themselves to Christ, and who died rather than deny Him, none can rest on that of the renegade whose only object was to gain money by arresting the religion. The silence of the traitor should convince us, if unconvinced by the glorious company of martyrs.

II. The Christian religion might have been assailed, with at least equal power, through the moral character of its Founder. If the chief priests and scribes could have charged Christ with any sinful practice, and could have made good the charge, their end would have been as effectually answered as if they could have shown Him an impostor and a deceiver. Has Judas no information to give? no, he can betray the person, he cannot impeach the purity of his Lord. It is the innocence of the Sufferer which fills him with excruciating remorse, and so drives him to despair that he takes refuge in suicide. We say of all this, that it is the most perfect and convincing testimony to the spotless character of our Saviour.

III. There is no such extraordinary instance in Scripture as

is furnished by the history under review of the utter incapacity of man to hinder the purposes of God. The treachery of Judas was overruled by God, rendering invulnerable, as at first, the testimony to Christ, both from miracle and prophecy. Judas Iscariot vindicates the Master he betrayed, and sustains the cause from which he apostatised.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1862.

REFERENCES: i. 17, 18.—Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 433. i. 21.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. xi., p. 328.

Chap. i., vers. 21, 22.—"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection."

THE Christian Ministry.

I. Consider what may be gathered, in regard to the office and qualifications of an Apostle, from that portion of Scripture brought before you by the services of the day. You will observe that St. Peter defines the office as that of being a witness to the resurrection of Christ, and requires that the appointed individual should be taken from those who had been associated with Christ through His earthly ministrations. So thoroughly is the resurrection an epitome of redemption—so completely may the whole of Christianity, whether as to evidence or doctrine, be gathered into the one truth, "The Lord is risen, the Lord is risen indeed,"—that in witnessing to the event which Easter commemorates, they witnessed to all which a sinful world was most concerned to know.

II. But why, if it were only of the resurrection that the apostles were to be witnesses—if they witnessed to everything in witnessing to this—was it necessary that the man chosen to the apostleship should be selected from those who had from the first been associated with Christ? The necessity is alleged in the text, and its reasons may be easily discerned. Those alone were fitted to bear testimony that Christ had risen, who had been much with Him before He went down into the grave, and much with Him after he had left it. Unless both conditions were fulfilled, there could be no convincing testimony. The Apostle must have been much with Christ not only after His resurrection, but before His crucifixion; for thus alone could he be fit to judge whether it was actually the Being who had been nailed to the tree, who was now claiming to have overcome death. We

see, then, how St. Peter gathers into our text a just description of the qualifications of an apostle. It was the resurrection to which they were to give prominence and on which they were to lay stress, and if it were of the resurrection that the Apostles were called to be witnesses, their having been associated from first to last with Christ was indispensable to the placing their testimony beyond the reach of cavil. We see, therefore, with what propriety St. Peter declared that "Of those who had companied with us all the time that the Lord was among us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection."

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1858.

I. We here see one secret of the superhuman strength which sustained the Apostles in the fiery trials through which they were destined to pass. They were strong, not because of any secret possession peculiar to them as Apostles, but simply because the mysteries of another world, closing in around them, had become an abiding vision, and issued through their faithfulness to the work of grace within them, in a consistent conformity of thought and act which was above the world. They had, therefore, in all their bearing a singleness, an ease, a dignity, an energy, before which the powers of this lower world gave way. They thus acted and suffered, because they lived and moved in the realities of an inner creation, which imparted its own colour and tone to all their views and judgments. But this grave power was independent of their special gift as Apostles, and was promised to abide in the Church for ever.

II. This aspect of the lives of the Apostles bears on our own history. We are so apt to look on the life depicted in the Acts of the Apostles as a kind of heroic form of Christianity, which has passed away, and that we have inherited only the possibilities of a lower state, more accommodated to the actual circumstances of modern society. Such a supposition is fatal to all high sanctity or real faithfulness. Moreover, it is to mistake the very meaning and object of the Acts of the Apostles. In the Acts we behold the Church in its abiding form, as it arose through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and as it was promised to continue through the grace of His unfailing presence even to the end.

III. The following simple rules will by the grace of God tend to cherish that pure inner light on which the increase of spiritual perception depends. (1) Fill up some of the vacant spaces of the day with recurring ejaculatory prayers. (2) Practice con-

templation in some form, however simple. (3) Study Holy Scripture at times in prayer on your knees. (4) Learn to view all acts, all words and thoughts, as they will appear at the day of judgment. (5) Beware of a religion which depends on ardent impulses or occasional efforts.

T. T. CARTER, *Sermons*, p. 151.

REFERENCES: i. 21, 22.—H. Melvill, *Voices of the Year*, vol. ii., p. 386; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 88; Bishop Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 333. i. 22.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 99. i. 23.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 193. i. 23-26.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 159. i. 24.—C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, p. 19. i. 25.—J. N. Norton, *Every Sunday*, p. 313; Mason, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 193; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 156; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 106; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 264. ii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1783; J. Vaughan, *Children's Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 148; 5th series, p. 93; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 125. ii. 1-4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 511; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 297; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 280; M. Wilks, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 449; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 161.

Chap. ii., vers. 1-13.—"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place," etc.

PENTECOST.

I. The congregation in that upper room was the representative, or, as it were, the seed-germ, of the whole Catholic Church of all the centuries and of every land. For a symbol of this, its world-wide significance, the little Church rehearsed the praises of redemption in all the tongues of all the lands over which God had scattered the tribes of Israel. This polyglot praise was the consecration of heathen speech to the service of Israel's Jehovah. It foreshadowed the catholic grace of God which has turned common and unclean tongues to holy use. It meant, though they knew it not, the gathering in of the Gentile races to the God of Jacob. Let us, then, not be fond of uniformity that is false Catholicism. Let us seek the higher unity which rests on freedom and variety. In the true Catholic Church which stands in our creed, and is dear to our heart, there are many tongues and forms of utterance—tongues so diverse that, alas! we often fail to recognise one another; yet is there only one Spirit, who inspires, and having inspired, interprets; who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

II. We are the heirs of Pentecost. Then first the waiting

Church below was linked tight in uttermost unity of life to its reigning Lord above. One Spirit embraces the throne in heaven, and the upper room on earth. To each Christian man in every Christian age, there has stood, and still stands open, the unrevoked grant of the fulness of the Spirit; such fulness as will fill him, if he be willing to take it in, up to his capacity. To each of us it is, and has been, according to our faith. If we are carnal, cold, timid, desponding, servile-hearted, fearful, it is not because we live under the law, not because God has set bounds to His grace, nor because the Holy Ghost is not yet, as if Christ were not yet glorified. It is because we have either no heart to desire, or no faith to expect. We have not now, because we ask not. "Ask and ye shall receive."

J. OSWALD DYKES, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 43.

I. IT is said in the text that the disciples *began to speak.* The first effect of the outpouring of the Spirit on the disciples was to prompt them to speak. A man may have a little of the Holy Spirit and observe silence, but if he is filled with the Spirit he cannot hold his peace.

II. The disciples began to speak with other tongues. The Lord descended to Babel and confused the tongues—He there and then set a train of circumstances in motion which necessarily resulted in diversity of languages. The Lord descended to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost—unified the tongues again—He there and then set a train of circumstances in motion which inevitably led to a better understanding between the nations, and a more thorough knowledge of each other's languages. The miracle of the Pentecost will gradually neutralise the miracle of Babel.

III. The disciples began to speak with other tongues the wonderful works of God. The wonderful works of God are, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These formed the grand topics which the disciples construed into other tongues; not nature, but the gospel; not creation, but redemption.

IV. They spoke to men of other nations. Increased life always demands increased scope for its exercise. The fire first burns into the heart of the disciples, then it begins to extend its area, and now it threatens to burn up all the stubble of the world.

V. The disciples spoke to other nations, that they also might be filled with the Holy Ghost. "Repent, and be baptized every

one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 20.

REFERENCES: ii. 1-13.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 124. ii. 1-21.—Parker, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 316. ii. 2, 3.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 255.

Chap. ii., vers. 2-4.

THE Christian's Interest in the Day of Pentecost.

I. At the day of Pentecost a new era did manifestly break upon the world; not an era during which human reason was to be more vast than it had been, but one during which there was to be a supernatural ascendancy, such as had not been vouchsafed under the former dispensation. The Spirit of God descended in greater measure, and in a new office, and the Gospel seemed irradiated, and mind sprang into comparative energy. Let the Spirit be withdrawn from the Church, and we thoroughly believe that men might become like the Jews, idolaters, with the truths of the Old Testament in their hands, and, like the Apostles, ignorant of redemption, and the facts of the New. While long before this visible descent the Holy Ghost had renewed our depraved nature in the elect people of God, yet at Pentecost He came in such measure, such fulness of purpose, such largeness of justice, and with such developments to unfold the mystery of the Gospel, as to put into the shade every previous communication, when, according to the description in our text, with the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, He became the instructor of the Church.

II. Note the connection of the gift of the Spirit with the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great event which Whitsuntide commemorates was but the act of a victor celebrating His triumphs and distributing His gifts among the people. He gives, not gold and not silver, but something incalculably more precious; He sends His own Spirit to renew the sons of the earth, and to transform the heirs of death into the heirs of immortality. Nay, He scatters pardon, peace, acceptance and happiness—whatever He had taken flesh to procure for mankind, seeing that the result of His mediation cannot be appropriated to us except through the Spirit; so that to send the Spirit was to make available the merits of His obedience unto death. For the men of every clime, in every age of the world, did the Spirit of the living God enter with the sound of the storm, and the flame of fire; and we ought to

rejoice at this witness of Christ's resurrection, and give thanks that we have not been left to the uncertainties of oral tradition; but that we are as thoroughly informed of the doctrine of our Lord, as though with our own eyes we had seen, and with our own ears we had heard the author.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1520 (see also *Voices of the Year*, vol. i., p. 514).

REFERENCES: ii. 2-4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1619. ii. 3, 4.—W. B. Pope, *Sermons*, p. 270.

Chap. ii., ver. 4.—**"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."**

THE Birthday of the Church.

I. In histories of this kind we are always under a temptation to seize upon the most extraordinary feature of the story—to take that as the essence of the whole. Thus the popular idea of Whit-Sunday is that it commemorates the gift of languages to the Apostles, by which, though uneducated men, they were qualified in a moment of time to preach the Gospel in every nation under heaven. But, indeed, this gift of tongues is but a small part of the matter. The true idea of Pentecost, that which makes it a festival for all time, is that it was the birthday of the Christian Church. What Sinai was to Israel, the making them into a people, that Pentecost was to Christ's disciples, the gathering them into a Church.

II. But a second point presses on us. If the fact of the Holy Ghost being shed upon the Apostles, on the very day when the giving of their law constituted the Jews to be God's people, leads us to fix this day as the beginning of the Christian Church, so does the conduct of the disciples, when the fiery tongues lighted on them, bring out a great principle of Christian life. The first use of speech under the prompting of the Holy Ghost was the praise of God. Was there, then, no preaching to the mingled multitude around? Doubtless, but the preaching was not by many mouths, but by one. There was no confusion in that first assembly of the saints. It was not a discordant sound of many voices speaking at once to the wondering throng. What the multitude heard, as they streamed together down the streets of Jerusalem to the chamber where the Apostles were, was one harmonious outburst of praise. And then, when the first terror began to subside, and the startled mind of the bystanders recovered its balance, then it was that St. Peter

stood forth from amidst the Spirit-bound assembly and calmly and rationally argued with the people. First comes the deep sense of God's presence and goodness, the lifting up of the soul unto Him, then the going forth to preach unto others; first the realisation of truth to ourselves, then the making it known by our lives, by our words, to our brethren; first the soul's speech in praise to God, then its speech for God; first the thought of heaven, then the pleading to heaven to earth.

Bishop WOODFORD, *Sermons on Subjects from the New Testament*, p. 67.

REFERENCES: ii. 4.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 171; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*. p. 269; H. Maclaren, *Sermons in Union Chapel*, p. 249.

Chap. ii., vers. 7, 8.—"**Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?**"

I. THERE are but two postulates necessary to the faith of Pentecost, or Whitsuntide: the first, God is Almighty; and the second, Christianity is of God. Given these two principles, all is intelligible. The new Gospel was a word, was a message, was a testimony, was a proclamation; these were its names for itself. Therefore it must find a voice and it must get a hearing. It was a failure if it did not. There must be a miracle. Men's eyes and ears must be made cognisant of God's intervention, must be appealed to, as St. Peter appeals to them on this occasion, "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." I know not how else the Gospel could ever have got out of little Palestine; how else the Gospel could ever have gained, in the first instance, the attention of mankind.

II. These Galilæans speak still. Each one of them, being dead, yet speaketh. No philosopher, no poet, no orator, ever spake as they speak. To have written a page in the Bible is to have an immortality of speech. There is no book like it, its enemies themselves being judges. Men feel that the Bible is something to them which none other book is. It has words of eternal life, which must be heard in their integrity, and heard in the birth-tongue. How is this and why? The Spirit of God touched their lips, and therefore it is life or death to listen.

III. The Spirit of God is not dead but living. The miracle of Pentecost was a token, was a symbol, was a proclamation—of what? Of the advent of the Holy Ghost, in all His fulness, to abide with us for ever. We want still God's Holy Spirit;

and still, as in times of old, He lives and works in Christ's Church. Not in the Church as an establishment, as an institution, as an aggregate of humanity or a centre of worship. It is by making the separate stones temples that the Spirit builds into one the great temple. It is by opening to the praying soul the secrets of Scripture, that the Spirit causes these long dead Galilæans to speak and preach to us. By bringing a spiritual ear to the spiritual utterance, so that spiritual things may be interpreted to the spiritual in that which is the common, the unchangeable language of hearts and souls.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 35.

Chap. ii., vers. 2, 17 (with John ii., ver. 20).—**"A rushing mighty wind"—"cloven tongues like as of fire"—"I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." "Ye have an unction from the Holy One."**

THE Fourfold Symbols of the Spirit.

I. A rushing mighty wind. In this symbol we have set forth the highest work of the Spirit—the communication of a new and supernatural life. In this sign lies the thought of a life (1) derived, (2) kindred with the life bestowed, (3) free like the life which is given, (4) a life of power.

II. The fire of the Spirit. The emblem of fire is selected to express the work of the Spirit of God, by reason of its leaping, triumphant, transforming energy. The metaphor of fire suggests also purifying. Get the love of God into your hearts, and the fire of His Divine Spirit into your spirits to melt you down, as it were, and then the scum and the dross will come to the top, and you can skim them off. Two things conquer my sin; the one is the blood of Jesus Christ, which washes me from all the guilt of the past; the other is the fiery influence of that Divine Spirit which makes me pure and clean for all the time to come.

III. The symbol of water. The Spirit is (1) cleansing, (2) refreshing and satisfying. Our thirst can be slaked by the deep draught of the river of the Water of Life, which proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb. (3) Productive and fertilising. In Eastern lands a well of water is all that is needed to make the wilderness rejoice. The one means of lofty and fruitful Christian living is a deep, inward possession of the Spirit of God.

IV. The oil of the Spirit. The reason for the use of such a symbol, I presume, would be in the invigorating and in the supposed, and possibly real, health-giving effect of the use of oil in Eastern climates. Whatever may have been the reason for

the use of oil in official anointings, the meaning of the act was plain. It was a preparation for a specific and distinct service. And so when we read of the oil of the Spirit, we are to think that it is that which fits us for becoming priests, prophets, and kings, and which calls us because it fits us for these functions.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 2nd series, p. 99.

REFERENCES: ii. 12-37.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 279. ii. 14-16.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 165. ii. 14-26.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 193.

Chap. ii., vers. 14-36.

THE first Gospel Sermon.

There are four links in St. Peter's chain of evidence. The first two, lying within the knowledge of his hearers, are briefly handled; the last two, being facts lying outside their observation, are confirmed at length by Scripture and living testimony.

I. God's hand first appeared in the public ministry of Jesus by the miracles which He had wrought. On these proofs the preacher had no need to dwell. They were known to all.

II. But now came the stumbling block with the audience. This Man of Nazareth, the fame of whose words had filled Palestine, had been by the national rulers solemnly adjudged a cheat and a blasphemer; and the people in a fickle hour had turned upon their former favourite and demanded His blood. Nakedly Peter recalls the harsh and horrid deeds of seven weeks before, and bluntly charges them on the crowd before him, so that each man's share in that Friday's work might rise up out of memory before his soul and tear his conscience with remorse and shame. Only his proof of the Messiahship of the Crucified is still far too incomplete to justify his dwelling on so irritating a theme, and therefore, without giving time for pause, or even breaking off his sentence, he goes on to announce—

III. That novel and astounding fact of resurrection, by which God had set His seal for ever beyond all cavil to the innocence and the claims and sonship of the Lord Jesus, "whom God raised up." What any devout and thoughtful Jew ought to have been looking for, as the chief mark of Messiah when He came, as God's crowning attestation to David's Son, could not be a thing incredible when at last affirmed of a Man who declared to the death that He was Messiah. If Jesus should be after all what He said He was, God must have raised Him up; but God had raised Him up, "whereof," adds the preacher, "we all are witnesses."

IV. One more proof, and only one, remained. David had not ascended into heaven to sit there in the seat of supreme, celestial monarchy and thence subdue all earthly foes; but Peter was prepared to say that Jesus had. In the change which the anointing Holy Ghost had wrought, the disciples were living proofs that their Master, though refused, baffled, slain on earth, had been exalted and enthroned in heaven, and had received of the Father—what He had now sent down to them—the promise of the Holy Ghost. Pentecost itself is the supreme demonstration of Peter's thesis that Jesus is the Christ; for on Jesus' friends, and on none else, has come what prophets promised and the just have waited for.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 63.

REFERENCES: ii. 14-17.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii, p. 126. ii. 16.—C. Molyneux, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 353. ii. 16-18.—W. Ince, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 243. ii. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 816; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 31; E. Conder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 241. ii. 17-21.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 167. ii. 22.—W. M. Taylor, *The Gospel Miracles*, p. 3.

Chap. ii., vers. 20-24, 32, 33.

THE first Christian Apology.

I. The audience which St. Peter addressed were familiar with the main outlines of Jesus' life as recent and notorious events. We assume them also. For the truth of the theory that Christ was God the Church offers one test-proof—the resurrection. Virtually, St. Peter does so in these early sermons of his. If God Almighty did raise the Lord Jesus from the dead into glorified and unchangeable life, as no other man ever was raised, then Jesus was the Son of God as He claimed to be, His life as Divine as it professed to be, His miracles genuine, His teaching true, His pretensions valid, His death innocent, His passion propitiatory and atoning. But if, which is the only other alternative, the alternative of unbelief, if God did not raise this Man, the Christian advocate throws up his case, our faith is false, our fancied Saviour an impostor, and we are in our sins like other men.

II. Even a Christ who became alive again is not enough, if He has so withdrawn Himself that in His absence He cannot help us. A Christ removed out of reach of men were as good as no Christ at all. Our Christ is not out of reach; withdrawn as He is from sensible contact with matter, into that spiritual world which on every side encompasses and perhaps touches

this earthly life of ours, Christian faith feels herself more really near to Him now than when He was present to sight. It is because the Spirit of power, and purity, and peace flows into her, from her no longer accessible Head, that the Church exists, and possesses the unity of a spiritual organism, and does effective work as the bearer of a regenerating Gospel. Her word, her work, her very being, hinge on the fact that the Holy Ghost inhabits her. We have here an advantage over an apologist so early as St. Peter. In proof that his newly-departed Master had sent down the Holy Ghost, Peter had nothing to appeal to but one unique and startling phenomenon just happening in his hearers' presence. He had the rushing noise, the flames of fire, the foreign tongues. We have the gathered spiritual experience of eighteen centuries. Christianity is not so small or so new a thing that it should be hard for any man who tries to track its working in detail on innumerable men, and gather up even its secret fruits. The Gospel is not a dead history, but a living power. It is not far off, but nigh us. God's breath is in it, and moral miracles attest the perennial contact with our sunken race of a strong Divine hand—a hand more strong than sin's—always at work to uplift and to heal.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: ii. 21.—*Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 214. ii. 22.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 83. ii. 22-24.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 321. ii. 23.—C. J. Vaughan, *The Church of the First Days*, vol. ii., p. 95.

Chap. ii., ver. 24.—**"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it."**

ST. PETER says Christ was raised from the dead because it was not possible that He should be holden of death. Let us consider what were the reasons for this Divine impossibility.

I. First, we find the reason which lay nearest to his conclusion, and which was intended to convince his hearers. It was not possible, because David had spoken concerning Him, that He should rise from the dead. It was their Jewish prophecy which forbade Christ to remain in the grave, and made His resurrection a Divine necessity.

II. But the second reason which would have shaped St. Peter's language lay in the character of Jesus Christ. His character, not less than His miracles, drew hearts to Him, and led men to give up all for Him. Of our Lord's character the leading feature, if we may reverently use such an expression, was His

simple truthfulness. It was morally impossible for Him to hold out a prospect which could not be realised, or to use words which did not mean what they appeared to mean. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ had again and again said that He would be put to a violent death, and that afterwards He would rise again. If He had not risen, He would not have kept His engagement with the world. This was the feeling of those who loved Him best, and especially of St. Peter. All was staked on His rising from the dead; and when He did rise, He was proved to be the Son of God. Thus it was the character of Christ, more than the force of prophecy, which made the idea that He should not rise impossible to His disciples.

III. But we have not yet exhausted St. Peter's reasons for his statement. In the sermon which he preached after the healing of the man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, he told his hearers that they had crucified the Prince of Life. In the truth of our Lord's jurisdiction over life, based on His Divine nature, he traces the third reason why it was impossible that He should not rise again. The buried Christ could not remain in the grave. He was raised by virtue of a Divine necessity, and this necessity while originally and strictly proper to Him, points also to a necessity which affects His Church. We see in it (1) the impossibility for Christians to be buried for ever in the tomb; (2) the principle which is applied to the Church itself as well as to our bodies. It is not possible that the body of Christ, instinct with His force and spirit, should be holden down in death. (3) The principle applies to individual lives. If we are any of us in the tomb of sin, it ought to be impossible for us to lie there.

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 257 (see also *Easter Sermons*, vol. i., p. 83).

REFERENCES: ii. 24.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 175; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 107. ii. 25-28.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 323. ii. 25-26.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons in Marlborough College*, p. 428. ii. 29-32.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 324. ii. 32.—T. Claughton, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 129.

Chap. ii., vers. 32, 33.—"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses," etc.

THE Church's witness for Christ:—

I. Christ hid in heaven needs a body as well as a spirit by which to manifest His living rule. He needs a body through which He may make Himself intelligible to men, and even to

unbelieving men; make Himself felt, certified, effective, enduring. This body He must have, and that body He has with pain secured Himself. And now into that prepared body His Spirit issues from Him, to gather it up into organised life, to inhabit it, to unify its capacities, to regulate its aims, to quicken its impulses, to fix its offices, to direct its gifts, to build up its intercourse, to feed and govern its entire frame. The Church is the witnessing body: it proves Christ's case, it testifies to His victory: and this it does first before God the Father. It manifests His glory by justifying His method of redemption; it bears witness before God that He has not sent His Son in vain; and secondly, it has to witness in the face of men, to prove, to convict, to convince, that even an unbelieving world may believe that the Father did send the Son.

II. And in accomplishing this conversion of the world it has two points—this Church—to prove and testify—first, that Christ is alive and at work now to-day on earth, and that He can be found of them that believe, and manifest Himself to those who love Him; and secondly, that He is so by virtue of the deed done once for all at Calvary, by which the Prince of this world was judged and the world was overcome, and man given access to God. What proofs can the Church offer for these two points? It has three proofs to give. (1) Its own actual life. This is its primary witness that Christ is now alive at the right hand of God the Father. Its one prevailing and unanswerable proof is, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ is alive, otherwise I should not be alive as you see me this day. (2) This personal life of Christ in His Church verifies and certifies to the world the reality of that old life on earth, of that death on Calvary, of that resurrection on Olivet. The living Church bears a book about with it, the Gospel book, the Apostolic witness, the witness of those who so beheld, tasted, handled the Word of Life. (3) Again, the body carries with it a third witness, not only the Apostolic record, but the Apostolic rite, the act commanded by the dying Christ to be done for ever as a memorial and a witness until His coming again. The present life, the unshaken record, the memorial act —these are the three prevailing witnesses by which the body testifies to the resurrection of the Lord.

H. SCOTT HOLLAND, *Family Churchman*, June 30th, 1886.

REFERENCES: ii. 32, 33.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p 189. ii. 33.—Bishop Barry, *First Words in Australia*, p. 195. ii. 33-36.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 480.

Chap. ii., ver. 36.—"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

I. THE name of Jesus is the name of the Man, which tells us of a Brother.

II. The second name, Christ, is the name of office, and brings to us a Redeemer.

III. The Lord is the name of dignity, and brings before us the King.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 1st series, p. 275.

REFERENCES: ii. 37.—Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 205; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 175; W. Thomson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 152; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of First Days*, vol. i., p. 55. ii. 37-40.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 452.

Chap. ii., vers. 37-41.

THE First Christian Baptism.

I. The double condition of baptism is repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. (1) Repentance, or the resolute turning and changing of the life, to face right round, away from old sin towards new holiness, was the one demand of John, the first baptizer. Yet even the change of mind, as he preached it, and as the people performed it at his bidding, was a much less thorough thing than the repentance which Peter preached. It was more like a reformation of manners than a renewal of the heart. No mere sweeping of the life as clean as might be (such as John's brief ministry had effected) could turn into saints men whose hands were red with the blood of Christ, whose hearts were filled with hatred to Christ. They must be born again, and the repentance which goes with that means nothing less than a reversal of the innermost springs and sources of moral action; the slaying of one nature, or one set of ruling tendencies, that another may come to life. (2) A second condition Peter asked which John had not asked—faith in Jesus as the Messiah. In this one fact, the identification of the man of Nazareth whom Pilate crucified, with the promised anointed Son of God, lies the centre of gravity of the whole Apostolic testimony; and though the word faith is not once named, yet such a cordial acceptance of this fact, as implies reliance upon Jesus Christ for salvation, is plainly the chief *differentia* distinguishing Apostolic from Johannine baptism.

II. The difference is not less wide in that which the new baptism expressed and sealed to the faithful. Two blessings

are named by St. Peter—remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. There are Christians, indeed, who live to-day as if the Holy Ghost were not yet given. They believe, as men used to believe, who only hoped for mercy to come. They have no more than half thrown off the shackles of a legal spirit, and are as joyless as if Christ had not risen. But this is their own fault—not the fault of their time. We are Gospel saints; baptized not into John's, but Christ's own baptism. Let us arise and claim our heritage. Let us invoke the Spirit who came at Pentecost to come to us; for "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," there is life, there is joy in the Lord.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 81
(see also *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 257).

Chap. ii., ver. 39.—**"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."**

THE Meaning of the Gift of Tongues.

I. What is the truth to which this gift was the index, of which it was the pledge? Consider the narrative in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and see whether it does not tell us. On a set of poor men, trained to a mechanical calling, despised by their countrymen, but sharing their contempt for other nations, noted for an uncouth dialect—there light cloven tongues as of fire. They have new powers of utterance, men from the province of the Parthian as well as the Roman world hear them proclaiming the wonderful works of God in the language of the lands where they have grown up. Is it a drunken inspiration? Have the orgies of a Dionysiac feast been brought into the Jerusalem worship? No, say the Galilæans, we are the disciples and witnesses of One whom your rulers crucified, whom God has raised from the dead. A great and terrible day of the Lord is at hand. To prepare for such a day, to signify that He whom you rejected as your King is both Lord and Christ, that is poured forth which you see and hear. Repent, therefore, and acknowledge your true King and Lord; be baptized in His name, and you shall receive that gift of the Holy Ghost which we have received.

II. The Spirit of God, teaching of the Father and the Son, leading men out of their narrow notions, can alone guide them into all truth. The missionary, if he is seeking to do his work faithfully, will be brought to confess that God's words are not deceitful words, but words proved in the fire; not words for

one age, but words that will last if heaven and earth pass away. But he will come to that discovery because it is the human discovery—the Divine discovery—which each of us will make for himself if we each seek to be honest in our vocations. We, too, must own that that Spirit is not given to any one of us for any faith or virtues of his own; that it is God's gift to Christ, the Head and Corner-stone of a society which we enter when we abandon our separate selfish pretensions and are content to be heirs of a common blessing.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 17.

REFERENCES: ii. 39.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 1; J. N. Norton, *Golden Truths*, p. 264; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 14th series, p. 69; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 266.

Chap. ii., ver. 40.—**"Save yourselves from this untoward (or crooked) generation."**

IT can scarcely be denied that our age is distinguished by peculiar advantages. If I am asked to name the most prominent feature of our days, I at once single out the enjoyment by every one of so much personal freedom.

I. The outcome of this freedom is the unprecedented activity which characterises the religious and philanthropic enterprises of our day. There is, however, no exception to the law which prevails in God's world, and which links together opportunity with danger. Multitudes in our day stand aloof, and take no share either in the labour or in the munificence by which great movements are sustained and made to succeed. Beware of the condemnation of the son who said, "I go sir, and went not."

II. What is the effect of personal freedom upon obedience to authority. It may be observed that we are made to feel in many ways, and often in unexpected quarters, that authority must now rest its claims to obedience upon reason, and not primarily on prescription. Is this a gain to us or a loss? Is it an advantage or a peril? Amidst much which good men deplore, there is more that they may welcome with hope. It is no inconsiderable advantage that in our times free discussion can precede change. For although discussion does not always prevent mischief, it is always useful, because it informs and educates men's minds and prepares them for changes which are inevitable. When the dust of strife has settled down, and the noise of disputation has ceased, it is always found that the Almighty is still sitting upon His throne, and that He is the Ruler over all. In His own way He has been accomplishing

His own designs, all the time that we, in our weakness and our fear, were trembling lest wrong judgment should prevail, and lest the firmament itself should fall down.

III. We must, however, work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We must not hope to be taken out of the world. We may not suppose that the whole tenor of modern thought will be changed, so as to become accommodated to our weakness or to our fears. On the contrary, we must gird up the loins of our mind and be sober. Whilst we recognise and guard ourselves from the manifold dangers which lurk even in the very forms of our liberty, we shall endeavour to prize and to hold fast the unspeakable advantages which, by means of this very freedom, God has placed within our reach. We have our own duty to do, our own talents to improve, our own devil to resist, our own crown to win. We must do this in the strength of the Lord, and in the power of His grace.

W. B. HOPKINS, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, April 27th, 1882.

Chap. ii., vers. 41, 42.—**"Then they that gladly received His Word were baptized," etc.**

ST. PETER'S Pentecostal Sermon.

Consider the several points noted in the text, as showing the result of St. Peter's sermon.

I. In the first place, the persons who had been baptized, and so added to the Church, remained in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship; that is, they joined themselves to their company, listened to their teaching, and acted accordingly; they were not ashamed to confess that they belonged to the new society who owned a crucified Master, and they did not wish merely to adopt a new name, and not withal to show by their conduct that their Christian name was a reality. As a general rule, it is clear that the effect of the conversion which was produced by St. Peter's sermon was true and vital; though there were some who disgraced their. profession, yet as a general rule, the profession which was made under the influence of St. Peter's words was fully borne out by the lives of the converts.

II. Another point mentioned concerning the converts is, that they remained steadfast in the breaking of bread; this phrase has in the New Testament a peculiar signification, and generally means that which undoubtedly it does mean in this case, namely, the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And the converts remained steadfast in the partaking of the

Holy Communion. In our own days, it is nothing remarkable for a Christian to listen to a sermon, and yet hold back from the breaking of bread; people think that listening to a sermon commits them to nothing, that the breaking of bread does; that the one is amusing, and the other certainly awful. What does this prove but that the heart is wrapped up in impenetrable folds of worldliness, or self-satisfaction, or carnal security.

III. Lastly, those who were converted by St. Peter's address remained steadfast in prayer. This was the proper fruit of a sermon. The sermon is rightly appreciated, it is manifestly blessed by the Holy Ghost, when it leads persons to value and join heartily in the Church's prayers. The prayers are not the mere introduction to preaching, but preaching is intended to make people pray.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 242.

REFERENCES: ii. 41-43.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 454; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 166. ii. 41-47.—C. Stanford, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 180. ii. 42.—W. M. Arthur, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 91; S. Pearson, *Ibid.*, p. 210; E. Johnson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 387; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 73; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 41. ii. 42, 43.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. i., p. 295. ii. 44, 45.—J. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 114; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 69.

Chap. ii., vers. 46, 47.—**"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," etc.**

THE Daily Service a Law in God's Kingdom.

We have here the very remarkable fact that the Apostles and the whole Church of Christ still continued, after the day of Pentecost, to attend the daily services of the temple. There was nothing contrariant between God's elder and later dispensation. They both worshipped Him in His temple, and offered the eucharistical sacrifice in their upper chambers. The time was not yet come when the daily sacrifice should be taken from the elder and given to the Catholic Church. Until this time came, the Church of Christ daily served God in the courts of the sanctuary on Mount Zion. When the time came that Jerusalem should be overthrown and the Divine Presence forsake His temple, the daily service passed to the altars of the Catholic Church. Consider some of the objections to the daily service which weigh with serious people.

I. As, for instance, it is often said that the daily service is

unnecessary now, because of the prevalence of family prayer. We painfully overstate the extent to which family worship has been restored. At the most, it is to be found in the houses of the educated, and of some others among the more unlettered, but more devout of our people. But in the homes of the millions of our population family worship is still unknown. The Church must open a shelter for the desolate, and dress an altar for those whose lot is cast in households where God is unknown.

II. Another common objection is, that the daily service of the Church is unprofitable, because so few are able to attend it. But why should any be defrauded of a blessing because others deprive themselves of it. Why should Simeon and Anna be thrust back from the gate that is called Beautiful, because others see no comeliness in it that they should desire it.

III. It is said that the habits of life are so changed as to make daily service impossible. They are changed—but for the worse. Once the world waited upon the Church, and took its hours and seasons from the hours and seasons of God's worship; but now all is reversed. When once the Church has restored the solemn days of fast and festival and the stated hours of daily prayer, there will be an order marked out for all men of good-will to follow. No sun should then go down on sins unconfessed, or blessings unacknowledged; and if any be truly hindered, still in their own home, or by the wayside, or in crowded marts, or in busy cities, or in the fields—when the bell is heard afar off, or the known hour of prayer is come—they may say with us the Confession and the Lord's Prayer, and though far from us on earth, may meet us in the court of heaven.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 186.

REFERENCES: ii. 46, 47.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 180; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 269. ii. 47.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1167; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 52; *New Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 81.

Chap. ii., ver. 47.—**"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."**

"And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved." (R.V.).

A PURE Church an Increasing Church.

Notice here:—

I. The profound conception which the writer had of the present action of the ascended Christ. *He* adds to the Church, not *we*—not our preaching, not our eloquence, our fervour, our

efforts; these may be the weapons in His hands, but the hand that wields the weapon gives it all its power to wound and to heal, and it is Christ Himself, who by His present energy, is here represented as being the Agent of all the good that is done by any Christian community, and the builder up of those Churches of His, in numbers and in power.

II. Notice how emphatically there is brought out here the attractive power of an earnest and pure Church. Wherever there is a little knot of men obviously held together by a living Christ, and obviously manifesting in their lives and characters the features of that Christ transforming and glorifying them, there will be drawn to them—by the gravitation which is natural in the spiritual realm—souls that have been touched by the grace of the Lord, and souls to whom that grace has been brought the nearer by looking upon them. Wheresoever there is inward vigour of life there will be outward growth; and the Church which is pure, earnest, living, will be a Church which spreads and increases.

III. Observe the definition given here of the class of persons gathered into the community, "Those that were being saved." Through all life the deliverance goes on, the deliverance from sin, the deliverance from wrath. The Christian salvation, then, according to the teaching of this emphatic phrase, is a process begun at conversion, carried on progressively through the life, and reaching its climax in another state. Day by day, through the spring and the early summer, the sun is longer in the sky and rises higher in the heavens. And the path of the Christian is as the shining light. Last year's greenwood is this year's hardwood; and the Christian, in like manner, has to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Saviour. So these progressively, and as yet imperfectly saved people, were gathered into the Church.

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 183.

REFERENCES: ii. 47.—C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 92. iii. 1-10.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xix., p. 376. iii. 2.—*Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 361; W. Scott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 244; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, p. 381; *Ibid.*, *Forty-eight Sermons*, vol. i., p. 105.

Chap. ii.

WE have here the history of the first Christian revival. Let us trace it through, and mark at once its origin and its characteristics.

I. It was ushered in by prayer. Like true children of God, these first disciples waited and prayed, asking evermore, that

they might receive the Holy Ghost according to His word. And herein they rebuke us dreadfully, for in our petitions we far too largely neglect the Holy Ghost.

II. The revival began in the Church in the quickening and enlightening of those who were already disciples. To have the world converted, we must have the Church purified and ennobled, through the enjoyment of a rich effusion of the Holy Ghost.

III. The revival was characterised by the preaching of the truth. Peter's discourse was (1) Biblical, (2) experimental, (3) pointed and courageous.

IV. This revival was characterised by many conversions.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Peter the Apostle*, p. 170.

REFERENCES: ii.—Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 333. iii. 1-10.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 457; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 247.

Chap. iii., vers. 1–11.

LOOK (1) at the social side, and (2) at the Apostolic side of this incident.

I. The social side. (1) We may be able to carry the cripple while we are unable to heal him. Do what you can. (2) The commonest minds, as well as the highest, have always associated the idea of charity with the idea of religion. (3) Look at the compensations of the poorest life. The man was carried daily by friendly hands. The man had the temple as his daily hope.

II. The Apostolic side. (*a*) The Apostles never attempted to do without public worship. (*b*) The Apostles never neglected human want in their anxiety to render Divine worship. (*c*) The Apostles never attended even to physical necessities in their own name.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 117.

Chap. iii., ver. 1; iv. ver. 4.

ST. PETER'S Second Apology.

If the latter portion of this speech of St. Peter's be examined, it will be found that its central point, on which is thrown the chief weight of exhortation, is precisely the same as in Luke's abridged version of the former speech. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," he says here. "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins," he said then. As though God were beseeching his countrymen through his lips, Peter here prayed them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; and

he used such motives as, in the mouth of a Jew speaking to Jews, were most fit and likely to persuade.

I. In the first place he suggested, as an extenuation of their guilt, that it had been contracted in ignorance. It may not have been quite true of all, but it certainly was true of the vast mass of the people, who wheeled so readily from applauding Jesus to execrating Him, that neither when they did the one nor the other had they real knowledge on solid grounds who He was. Such ignorance as this does not excuse a crime, but it palliates it. It makes it more pardonable.

II. Further to open his hearers' hearts to penitence, he reminded them, as he had done at Pentecost, how their very crime had been the fulfilment, all unknown to themselves, of those predicted sufferings which it had been God's will to inflict upon Messiah. Through their slaying of the Christ, God had ordained that the Christ should become their Saviour.

III. But the most singular motive by which Peter here pressed his countrymen to repent, is that, upon their doing so, had been made to hinge the return of Christ in glory, and that predicted era of blessedness which is to enter when His personal presence is restored to the earth. The object of our Lord's retirement into the heavens he took to be the conversion of Israel to faith in Himself. So long as He was here they had denied Him; now, in His absence, they were to return and call with tears upon Him whom they had pierced. The faster Israel turned to Jesus, the sooner would Jesus return to Israel; for as Peter wrote a great many years later, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise" to return, He is only "long-suffering, not willing that any should perish." With urgency, therefore, did the preacher that day press upon his brethren, as Israelites, to turn every one from his iniquities, so that there might come the sooner those times of national reviving and restoration, which had so often been predicted to their fathers.

J. Oswald Dykes, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 123.

Chap. iii., ver. 6.—"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

I. Man is, by nature, morally crippled and helpless; a beggar, a bondman, carried about at another's will. Great bodily infirmities are the shadows of the sins and weaknesses of the soul. What a cripple is among men, a sinner is before the angels and pure spirits on high. All sin works by privation.

It shuts up senses and organs which God meant to be inlets of joy and channels of life.

II. There is a Name which can make us whole again, sound, glad, and free. Your soul wants precisely what that poor cripple's body wanted, power to stand, to walk, to leap, and to utter forth the praises of God. And that power is in Christ, and in Christ alone. Light to the blind, strength to the impotent, life to the dead is He. The more you think of it earnestly, the more you will find that life is just what you need. A man whose system is worn out can be patched up for a while by the physicians, but a new gush of life into it is what it needs. Give it that, or you patch and prop in vain. This is what Christ can truly do for your soul. I am not speaking now of the solace of His compassion, of the joy of His communion, of the sweetness of His love, of the glory of the hope which He inspires. I sum it all up when I say, "In Him is life." That life, God's life, He can give to man, He will give to you. It will be a power in the end, all-mastering, all-ruling, a power unto salvation.

III. This is the time to believe on that Name, and to rise up and walk. Does God care for wrecks? Let that poor cripple answer. Let the Lord's works of mercy answer. They were mostly fragments, broken fragments of humanity that He gathered; they were mostly wrecks that He saved. Publicans, harlots, thieves, prodigals, whatever the world flung out as worthless, He gathered. Such life is in Him, such power of quickening and re-creating souls, that wretched ones, whom Scribes and Pharisees cast out from the decent fellowships of earth, shall be reigning among the angels, white-robed, palm-crowned, through eternity. Lay hold on Christ and the Lord will lift you; you will stand up as a man, and look your tempters and tyrants in the face; you will find strength to defy them, and to win at first, at any rate, an easy victory. You will go forth to the old drudgery with a new and wonderful joy.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *Christian World Pulpit*, Oct. 18th, 1876, p. 248.

NOTE:—

I. The lame man. It is a fact that almost all the alms of the world are administered at the gate of the Temple. Almost all the charitable institutions of the world are dependent for their moral and pecuniary support; and almost all the benevolent movements of society are dependent for their success, on them

that go up to the Temple at the hour of prayer. When money is needed to assuage the world's grief, to relieve the world's distress, men go straight to the gate of the Temple to beg. Christianity is founded not so much in the powers as in the needs of the race.

II. The cure of the lame man. The man sought alms—but the Apostles gave him what was better; they gave him health. Health without money is infinitely better than money without health. Moreover, by endowing him with health, they were conferring on him the ability to earn money; by imparting the greater they were also giving the lesser. In this the miracle was a sign, and typifies to us the Divine method of saving the world. The Gospel does not aim directly at improving men's circumstances, it aims at improving men themselves. But no sooner does it bring about a moral improvement in the men, than the men bring about a noticeable improvement in their surroundings. The Gospel converts the man, the man converts the house. Men need better houses and purer air, and more wholesome water; but the great want of men is life—more life; and Jesus Christ came that they might have life, and have it more abundantly. Utilitarianism *does* men good, Christianity *makes* them good.

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 52.

LOOK:—

I. At that which Peter had not, "Silver and gold have I none." The question as to whether the Church's power is increased by worldly possessions is one of the very last importance. It was an essential condition of the prevalence of the Gospel that men should be holy, and if they were determined to cling to their sins it was a necessary consequence that the only way to peace should lie through contention. So, though it be the future of the Church to inherit the glory of the Gentiles, it is an essential condition of her power that she shall abandon all selfishness and covetousness, and if men will cling to selfishness and covetousness, then the only way to power is by stripping herself of her earthly possessions. God only knows whether that be necessary for the Church. Now, if ever, we must gird up our loins and trim our lamps, taking up the pilgrim's staff and scallop-shell, seeking upon the hard rough sands of the world's desert the way to the heavenly Jerusalem.

II. Notice next the positive aspect of the text. (1) The completeness of the miracle. The Apostle did but speak, and

straightway by the Almighty power of God—it was as if an electric shock had passed through him—the impotent man could leap and walk. And so it is in the conversion of the soul. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation." (2) The name and means by which the miracle was wrought. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." There is the explanation of all; there is the explanation of the miracle; there is the secret spell of Apostolic power. Just at the time when His people are passing through gloom and sorrow, the highest heavenly power is wielded with a tenderest human pity, so that when we come in our weakness, our sin, our loneliness, and look up to heaven, we see not the naked blinding glory of the Deity, but the face of the High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities bending over us in pity and love.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 407.

REFERENCES: iii. 6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 189; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 3. iii. 6-8.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 60. iii. 7.—*New Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 81.

Chap. iii., ver. 10.—"The beautiful gate of the Temple."

THE architecture of the old Jewish Temple may serve us for a parable to-day. The truth that it suggests will be the harmony between a noble undertaking and a beautiful beginning—that every true temple ought to have a beautiful gate. The importance of beginnings is the veriest commonplace of practical virtue. Think of the wisdom and love of God who has put the beauty of youth at the entrance of every human life, and especially now consider the child's religion.

I. The religion of childhood is not only possible, but it is the normal type of religion; is that which Christianity most contemplates; and that which, when Christianity shall have really entered into her power, all men shall accept as the very image and pattern of religion. The current idea of the Churches, that adult conversion is the type and intended rule of Christianity, comes largely from the fact that the first preachers of Christianity had of necessity to be largely occupied with men who had known nothing of Christianity in their youth. The evident design of God's creation, the comprehensive form of the incarnation, the clear presence in children of the power and the need of religion, these are the forces which, in spite of every tendency of the grown people to make children wait till they grow up, has always kept alive a hope, a trust, however blind, that a child's religion

was a possible reality; that a child might serve, and love, and live for God.

II. What is the true character of the religion of a child? Certainly to be sweet and real, it must be the possession by God of the faculties and qualities that belong especially to childhood. (1) The first and most prominent of them all is the faculty of genuine, unhesitating, unqualified admiration. (2) Another thing in a child's religion is the perfect healthiness of his traditionalism, of his belonging to a certain sect, and holding certain opinions. Grown people often cling to the faith of their fathers controversially. Their love for it is mixed up with jealousy and spite and pride. A child knows nothing of all that. (3) The simplest and primary form of the presentation of the Gospel is the one which is preserved most truly and necessarily in the teaching of children. The child is a little Athenian, always listening for some new thing. And so the child is ready, if it can be rightly told him, to hear, above all the other messages that come to him out of this ever-opening and surprising world, the best and highest news of all, the Gospel, simply as glad tidings of the love of God and the salvation of the world by Jesus.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 127.

REFERENCES: iii. 11, 12.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 459. iii. 12.—R. W. Dale, *The Evangelical Revival*, p. 171.

Chap. iii., vers. 12-26.

THE speech of Peter may be regarded in four aspects:—

I. As showing the false method of looking at human affairs. "As though through our own power of holiness we had made this man to walk."

II. As showing the true method of regarding the most extraordinary events. "God hath glorified His Son Jesus."

III. As showing the only method of setting man right with God. "Repent ye therefore and be converted."

IV. As showing the sublime object of Jesus Christ's Incarnation. "To bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 119.

REFERENCES: iii. 12-26.—R. W. Dale, *Evangelical Revival*, p. 171; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 314. iii. 13, 15—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 460. iii. 14, 15.—J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 321. iii. 16.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 461; vol. xix., p. 301.

Chap. iii., ver. 17.—"And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

THE Danger and Results of Unbelief.

Consider :—

I. How St. Peter came to have a right to make allowance for the Jews. When the Apostle states that what the Jews did, they did through ignorance, he must be considered as conveying the idea that they were not acquainted with the actual character and dignity of Christ. They did not crucify Him as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, but as one who pretended to be the Messiah, and who blasphemed in calling Himself the Son of God. But were the Jews, then, innocent in this their ignorance? We may not venture to say this; we may not venture to think that St. Peter implied this; for this would evidently impeach the whole course of Christ's ministry on earth, representing His miracles as defective credentials, inadequate to the establishing of the character which He claimed to Himself. The Jews, beyond all question, if ignorant, were to blame for their ignorance. They might have known, they ought to have known, that Jesus was the Christ, and ignorance can only be an excuse when we do not ourselves cause it, whether through wilfully neglecting means of obtaining information, or cherishing prejudices which bar out the truth. It was not in crucifying Christ, but in rejecting the final evidence afforded by the descent of the Holy Ghost, that they perpetrated the sin for which they were cast off.

II. Contrast the case of the modern unbeliever with that of the Jews and judge whether it be an exaggerated charge which would fix on the latter the far greater criminality. The Jew crucified Christ whilst His appearance was that of an ordinary man; we crucify Him afresh when He has assumed the glory which He had from the beginning with the Father. It was the Son of Man on earth who was crucified by the Jew; it is the Son of God in the heavens who is crucified by ourselves. Christ had not then given the most touching proof of His love and His compassion. He had not yet died for His enemies; neither was it understood, even by His disciples, and much less by His adversaries, that the death which He was willing to undergo was to serve as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The Jew, at the time, and in the act referred to in our text, had not the power of sinning such a sin as any one of us sins, when, through not believing in Christ, he crucifies Him afresh.

It is Christ's having been once crucified in the flesh, which gives such immeasurable heinousness to His being crucified again in the spirit.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1498.

REFERENCES: iii. 17.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 170. iii. 17, 18.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 462. iii. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 804; J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 8; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 8; W. Hay Aitken, *Around the Cross*, pp. 33, 49. iii. 19.—J. H. Thorn, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 105. iii. 19, 20.—R. S. Turner, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 264; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 172; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xix., p. 115.

Chap. iii., vers. 19, 21.—**"Times of refreshing—times of restitution."**

THE Restitution of All Things will be:

I. A clearing away of suffering. Earth shall be restored to its original beauty; its face shall be wiped from tears; its scarred and stained countenance shall be radiant again with a more than Eden loveliness: for it is one of those "all things" which must receive restitution when the heaven which has received Him shall send Jesus back.

II. We pass to a thought not less bright, and far more practical, when we say that man, his soul and body, his very being and life, is among these "all things" which are awaiting a restoration. Who that has seriously tried the struggle to be holy, the warfare under Christ's banner with indwelling, obstinate, inveterate sin, has not found himself vexed and irritated, if not reduced to despair, by perpetual failure; has not felt times without number that without a promise he would surrender, he would capitulate on the instant, and that the promise which keeps him fighting is not more that of "strength as his day," than that of victory in the end? If there be a restoration of all things at the Advent, and amongst these "all things" I am, then I will arise, if need be, from a thousand falls in one day, cast down, but not destroyed.

III. That restitution of all things which thus affects earth and the man, has an aspect, finally, towards God. It is one of the express revelations of the times of refreshing, that then the conscious presence, the spiritual Shechinah, the Divine companionship, will be restored. In the light of that sun all lesser luminaries will pale, if not vanish. That only can live there which can bear the light of God. Sin will be destroyed, and all that is of it; selfish affection, creature worship, idolatrous love. All that then survives will have fallen into its place by

instinct; all other love will shine in the love of God; stronger, more intense than ever, yet entirely pure, entirely devout, absolutely sinless and selfless. In the prospect of that admission into the very presence of God, let us be willing to endure now the difficulty of the pursuit and the delay of the attainment. If we give up the search, we must abandon the hope, if we will only seek on, we shall surely find.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 66.

REFERENCES: iii. 19-21.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 35; *Homilist*, 1st series, vol. v., p. 260; T. L. Cuyler, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 352; J. Keble, *Sermons for Lent and Passiontide*, p. 318; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 111. iii. 20.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 368. iii. 21.—S. Martin, *Pulpit*, vol. iii., No. 1625. iii. 22.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 217. iii. 22-26.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 36.

Chap. iii., ver. 26.—**"Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."**

HERE, in few words, is the plan proposed by our heavenly Father to make us happy, a plan well worthy to be considered.

I. God does not secure happiness to his people by making all of them rich. Instead of saying "Blessed are ye rich," he says, "Blessed are the poor."

II. Our heavenly Father does not propose to make us happy by bestowing on us the empty honours of the world.

III. God's plan for making His people happy does not consist in affording them a large share of worldly pleasure.

IV. There can be no salvation for us unless we are delivered from our sins. God only makes men happy by making them holy. The object of the coming of the Son of God in the flesh was that "He might save His people from their sins."

J. N. NORTON, *Old Paths*, p. 159.

NOTE:

I. The boldness and loftiness of the claim which is here made for Jesus Christ.

II. The dawning vision of a kingdom of world-wide blessings.

III. The purely spiritual conception of what Christ's blessing is "To bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 1st series, p. 245.

REFERENCES: iii. 26.—W. Hay Aitken, *Around the Cross*, p. 97; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 377; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 130. iii. 26.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 190; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 55.

Chap. iii

THE Lame Man Healed.

We are reminded by this incident:

I. That there are some things more valuable than money. Peter with his gift of healing was of infinitely greater service to this lame man than if he had possessed the riches of Crœsus. The moment wealth becomes an end to be sought simply for its own sake, it ceases to be a blessing.

II. That fidelity is the true kindness in the end. Mark how pointedly Peter here addresses the multitude. He charges home upon them, in unmistakable terms, the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithfulness is to be tempered with justice in all things, but especially when we are dealing with the unconverted.

III. That the enjoyment of times of refreshing from God's presence is inseparably connected with our return to God.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Peter the Apostle*, p. 185.

REFERENCES: iii.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 385. iv. 1, 2.—Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 335. iv. 1-4.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 37.

Chap. iv., vers. 1, 2.—**"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."**

IN this verse we find, in simple words, the true philosophy of all persecution.

I. The authorities were offended because the Apostles taught. (1) They considered that the Apostles were not personally qualified to discharge the important duties of public teachers. Human nature is ever the same. The priests are still grieved that men who are no scholars should undertake to decide what is truth and what is error. (2) The authorities were further of opinion that the Apostles were not only disqualified educationally, but that they had no official right to teach. The priests claimed an exclusive right to teach. This, however, had not always been the case in Jewry. The rights and ceremonies of religion only had been deposited in the safe keeping of the priests; the teaching of the people was entrusted principally to the prophets. When prophecy died out, the priests assumed the functions of the prophets, and, at length,

came to look upon themselves as the only rightful teachers of the nation.

II. The authorities were offended because the Apostles taught the people. (1) Some felt grieved on personal considerations; for the Apostles, labouring to enlighten and convert the people, were undermining the power of the priests. (2) Others felt annoyed on ecclesiastical grounds. (3) Others felt annoyed on civil grounds.

III. The authorities were enraged with the character of the Apostles' teaching. (1) It reflected deep discredit on the tribunals of the nation. (2) Their teaching, moreover, was new, and the Pharisees were very much in love with the old. (3) Their teaching flatly contradicted that of an influential section of the hierarchy. The Sadducees felt aggrieved that they should preach "by the example of Jesus the resurrection from the dead." But the imprisonment of the Apostles did not check the mighty progress of the Gospel. Rather did it help it forward. Times of persecution are generally times of much spiritual prosperity.

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 70.

Chap. iv., vers. 1-22.

LOOK at this passage: (1) from the side of the Jewish leaders; (2) from the side of the Apostles.

I. On the side of the Jewish leaders there was (1) illiberality; (2) shortsightedness; (3) impotence.

II. On the side of the Apostles there was (1) complete intelligence within the sphere of their ministry; (2) unconquerable courage in narrating and applying facts; (3) Christian magnanimity in preaching the Gospel; (4) incorruptible loyalty to God and to His truth.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 121.

REFERENCES: iv. 1-22.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 10. iv. 1-31.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 449.

Chap. iv., ver. 2.—"They taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

APOSTOLIC Teaching.

I. The Apostles taught. (1) Christianity is an educator of men; it teaches them to think. That is the meaning of the word "educate"—to lead out the mind, to develop its dormant faculties. And this the Gospel is eminently calculated to do. It stimulates the human mind wherever it goes. (2) Christianity

teaches men to know. That is the meaning of the word "instruct"—to pile up in the mind the proper materials of knowledge. Christianity is aptly described as a revelation; that is, it brought Divine verities within the sweep of our intellectual vision, verities which before lay inaccessible to us. (3) Thinking answers not its paramount purpose, except as it leads to knowing; and Christianity, as a system of instruction, conjoins thinking and knowing, thereby fulfilling our idea of teaching.

II. They taught the *people.* Keen students of history, sacred and profane, are able to discern two stages in religion. (1) The first is that in which is awakened within us reverence for the High—worship of that which is above us. This was the goal of Jewish culture—profound reverence for the High. (2) Christianity teaches us to reverence not only that which is above us, but also that which is under us. The Gospel has been preached to the poor. (3) Christianity cultivates reverence for the High *and* reverence for the Low. "They taught the people."

III. They preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (1) They preached the fact of the resurrection. (2) They preached the doctrine of the resurrection. (3) Thus their doctrine was much in advance of the highest Gentile and Jewish teaching. The truth, which is only sparingly revealed in the Jewish Scriptures, and feebly apprehended by half a dozen eminent saints, shines upon us from every chapter of the New Testament, and is the common property of every believer.

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 90.

REFERENCES: iv. 5-7.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 155. iv. 7-10.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 147. iv. 7-20.—A. B. Bruce, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 458. iv. 8-12.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 156.

Chap. iv., ver. 12.—"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

I. ST. PETER here makes a positive assertion. He says that Jesus Christ—His name—that is, Himself, brings salvation. It is natural for us to ask, What kind of salvation? Salvation was already a consecrated word in the language of Israel. It meant very generally the deliverance of Israel from outward and inward enemies; it meant very frequently the deliverance of Israel as a whole; it meant especially national salvation.

The political salvation implied, as in the last result it always does, a moral and spiritual salvation. The outward deliverance necessitated an inward one, and the only Saviour who could deal with the thoughts and wills of men, who could begin really from within, was He who had just now, though invisibly, healed the cripple. Israel must be saved by Him, or it would perish. And thus we are led on to perceive an unspeakably deeper sense of the Apostle's words. Salvation really means here—it can mean no less—the saving from moral ruin and death of the separate souls of men.

II. Salvation in this sense was, it is plain, no monopoly of Israel. What in the world was Israel that it should claim the whole power of the saving name? The final, the absolute religion, could not but be—it lay in the nature of things—universal. The question of the Gentiles had not yet been raised as it was raised a few years later, but there was behind the Apostles the broad commission of Christ to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. And in this sense the word "salvation" has all the meaning for you and for me that it had for St. Peter and the first Christians.

III. But the Apostle adds, "Neither is there salvation in any other." When we affirm that Christianity alone can save, we do not deny that other agencies beside Christianity may improve mankind. But such influences are bounded by the horizon of time; they have no effects in the great hereafter. At least, they do not save us. They are not opponents of the Church of Christ; they are not even her rivals. They move in a totally different sphere of action. They only embellish our outward life; they leave our real soul, our real self, untouched. The question which will alone interest every one of us a short century hence, when other human beings have taken our places, and we have passed away, will not be whether, during this short span of life, we have been improved, but whether we have been saved. There can be no doubt that this conviction was in the first days of Christianity, and has been since, a great motive power in urging devoted men to spread the religion of their Master; a motive only second in its power to the impulsive force of the love of Christ.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 658

THERE are four things in the text commanding attention.

I. Salvation. To be saved from ignorance, folly, vain imaginations, an evil heart, a rebellious will, an evil conscience, a

damaged character, the dominion and presence of sin, the position of the guilty, and from the punishment of evil-doers; to be sustained in this life's sorrows, and to have them sanctified; to be able to triumph over death and the grave; to be forgiven—restored, regenerated, and sanctified; to escape perdition, and to inherit heaven—is, so far as words can reveal it, the whole of salvation. This God promised at the beginning, this God has provided, and this we offer you in the preaching of the Gospel.

II. Salvation in a Person. To be saved by a Saviour. (1) This shows our weakness, and in our weakness we see our wretchedness. The evil which afflicts us is such that we require a personal Redeemer. (2) This arrangement removes all cause of boasting from the saved. (3) This arrangement places the redeemed under special obligations. (4) It renders the actual work of Salvation a service of sympathy and love.

III. Look at Salvation in a Person made known. God has given this name of Jesus—given it in writing to be read, given it by preaching to be heard, given it Himself that it may never be forgotten and that it may be above every name, given it among men that men may read, hear it, learn and repeat it, and incorporate it with their prayers and their songs, and that it may become as familiar in their mouths as any household word.

IV. Look at the fact that the dispensation of salvation is limited to that Person. It would be interesting to inquire into the causes of other names and things being put forward. Perhaps the chief cause is pride. We shrink from the practical acknowledgment of entire and absolute dependence upon the grace of God for our redemption; we despise the simplicity of faith, or we are not prepared to follow after holiness. But, however that may be, "neither is there salvation in any other."

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 225.

REFERENCES: iv. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 209; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 159; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons in Marlborough College*, p. 352; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 108; S. Martin, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 194; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 352.

Chap. iv., ver. 13.—"They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

I. WE must be with Jesus, if we would bear a good testimony for Him in the presence of the world. To have heard of Him, to have read of Him, is not enough: we must be with Him;

walk with Him in a consenting will, love Him as having first loved us, be joined to him in one spirit. Thus alone can consistent testimony be borne to Him by His people. They who have been with Jesus fear not the pomp, nor the scoffs, nor the threats of men.

II. But we stand not merely in the presence of foes without, we have other and more powerful foes within. Many a man could bear testimony for Christ, before a world in arms, who yet is hushed into ignominious silence in the council chamber of his own heart. Would you find a remedy for this? Would you uplift the spiritual part of a man, so that it may give bold testimony for Christ within him, assert Christian motives, press Christian rules of action, put forward Christ as His pattern? Then must that man be *with Jesus;* Christ must dwell in that heart by faith. Till that is so, while Christ is absent, heard of, read of, talked of, but not present, there will be no testimony at the heart's fountain, no Christ in the thoughts, words, actions.

III. Yet again, we all have to grapple with sorrows. Ere we have gone on long in life, they stand thick around us: hopes betrayed, fears realised, joys dashed with bitterness—these are every man's companions by the way. Would you arm the man for a successful conflict with adversity? Would you enable him to bear a consistent testimony in the presence of sorrow? Once more, he must be with Jesus. Here, above all, he requires his Saviour's presence.

IV. There will come a day when each one will be called on to wrestle with the last foe; to bear in the presence of his past life, and in the presence of those who are to outlive him, his witness to Christ. Would we meet death fearless, and in humble assurance that we have a part in One who has robbed him of his terrors? There is but one way, and that way is to have been with Jesus during our lives here.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 77.

REFERENCES: iv. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 21; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 42; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 280; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., pp. 81, 82; vol. iv., p. 276; vol. vii., p. 65; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 98. iv. 13-18.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 157. iv. 14.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 180. iv. 19.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 200. iv. 19, 20.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 159; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 149.

Chap. iv., ver. 20.—**"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."**

THERE are two spiritual facts here presented to us: (1) that the true Christian has heard from heaven what is worth repeating, and (2) that the Spirit of Faith prompts the Christian to repeat what he has heard.

I. Notice the order in which religious belief and religious speech are here placed. We have heard; and we cannot but speak. This order has been reversed, and much mischief has been the result. Men have been trained to speak before they have believed. Faith comes by hearing—faith grows by listening—doubts are dispersed by waiting, and enquiry. False speech, hasty speech, make such Christians, if you please to call them Christians, as Ananias and Sapphira, and even Simon Magus; but quiet hearing and listening make such Christians as Peter, and John, and Paul. Let us speak that we believe; but let us first believe and then speak.

II. But while it is of the nature of faith to incline to speech, that testimony which is the object of Christian speech, exerts the same influence. For what is it that the Christian has heard. He has heard faithful sayings worthy of acceptation, words of salvation, words of life, words of God; the word of God to our fallen and perishing world. Its utility, its wonderfulness, the goodwill to man that it induces, the believer's own conscious obligation to the Gospel, all move him to speak. If the Christian history appeared to Him a fable, seriousness might bid him hold his peace; if the Christian doctrine were doubtful, integrity will command silence, but we say that the tendency of the believer's faith in the Gospel is to move him to speak.

III. And beside the inward impulse, there is an external demand for honest, enlightened and seasonable Christian speech. The disciple of Christ believes that which multitudes around him have not heard: and as he detects, by many symptoms, their ignorance, the spirit of faith saith, "Inform them—speak." To what shall we liken the Christian in the midst of an ignorant community? He is like a fountain in the desert, he is like a beacon on a dangerous coast; he is like his Master when surrounded by a multitude of the sick and needy in Palestine. For sin in all its forms the Christian knows a remedy and has a remedy. Then keep not silence about it; but of it intelligently, lovingly, earnestly, but seasonably, speak.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, **1st series, p. 69.**

REFERENCES: iv. 21, 22.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, **vol. iv., p. 161.** iv. 23.—Parker, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 303.

Chap. iv., vers. 23-37.—**"And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them," etc.**

I. THE whole Church is interested in the proceedings of its individual members.

II. The right method of treating opposition to the Kingdom of Christ.

III. The spiritual and social results which follow the right acceptance of service and suffering.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 122.

REFERENCES: iv. 23-37.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 73. iv. 24.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 202. iv. 27.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 374. iv. 28.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 201.

Chap. iv., ver. 30.—**"Thy Holy Child Jesus."**

THE Child Christ.

I. The day which beheld our Lord in the Temple among the doctors was no doubt the close of a wondering and inquiring time. I conceive of that moment that it gave point and purpose to a long series of internal questions and wondering visions. Here, I conceive, He was attempting to unseal the meaning of His own mission; and can we not conceive how, as the Eternal Wisdom spoke through Him, He would perplex the lawyers; and, perhaps, even compel some with wonder to exclaim—"A greater than Moses is here." One conceives the embarrassment of the learned doctors, the masters of tradition, before the Divine simplicity of the Holy Child Jesus.

II. But it was very significant that it was after this eventful period in the Temple that we read more expressly of the humiliation of the Child Christ. "He went down into Nazareth with His parents, and was subject unto them." It is easy to see that, as gradually He was putting off His childhood, He was putting off His happiness. To become conscious is to become unhappy. Christ, I conceive, bade farewell to the enjoyment of life after that visit to the Temple; henceforth He was haunted and oppressed by the work given Him to do.

III. We have no knowledge who were the companions of the Child Christ. It is not, perhaps, unreasonable to suppose that some of those who became His apostles were His fellow-villagers in those days. Certainly they were all growing into maturity—to be, to do, and to suffer with Him. He is a Child round whom, as the central figure, however humble and lowly, all the

disciples, from so many quarters of the land—nay, the world, are to group; all developing for eternity, saved or lost by their acceptance or rejection of that Child.

IV. The infant nature of Christ is the power by which God has moved the world. The *Holy Child Jesus.* Before that birth the world had only known what evil could be enclosed in man; how vile and worthless, how low and dark. But this Child—all the same faculties, all the same powers—shows to us human nature, with God as the Divine Artificer. Christ has consecrated childhood.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Sermons*, p. 19.

REFERENCES: iv. 30.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 545. iv. 31.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 109; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 166. iv. 32.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 36.

Chap. iv., ver. 32—v., ver. 11.

ANANIAS and Sapphira.

I. We have much need to lay to heart the lessons of this incident. Christ's Church has long since come to include so many false or unspiritual members, and to be so blent with the world, that we fail to realise its ideal sanctity as the body of Christ, animated in a peculiar manner by the Divine presence. We fail to feel that to offend against the saints is to offend Christ; that to fetch our worldly sins of conceit, ambition, envy, or covetousness, into sacred sources, is to affront God to His face; nay, more than this, we are apt to lose out of our hearts that faith in the Third Person of the adorable and undivided Trinity which realises Him as One who can be wronged, grieved, insulted, or lied to; One who, though He keeps Himself out of view, is yet sensitive to the treatment which in the persons of righteous men He daily receives from the profane. The peculiarity which makes the Church the kingdom of God, if it is the kingdom of God at all, must aggravate offences done against it; and the special presence of the Holy Ghost, if He is specially in it, must stamp all contempt or outrage with a darker dye.

II. It is to mark the sanctity of that enclosure, which is now for the first time called the Church, that this narrative of judgment is set thus in the forefront of its history. On the earliest appearance of open sin within the Church follows the earliest infliction of Church discipline. Because it is the earliest, it is taken out of the hands of servants, to be administered with appalling severity by the hand of the Master. As an instance

of earthly discipline it was entirely exceptional, a warning not to be repeated. The time and fashion of all our deaths is with God. The life, which we are daily forfeiting by transgression, is daily spared through mercy. If one day His mercy turned to judgment, and He took from the earth two forfeited lives, for the warning and bettering of many, who shall say, either that the lesson was dearly bought, or that the penalty was undeserved. It is well that men should be taught once for all, by sudden death treading swiftly on the heels of detected sin, that the Gospel, which discovers God's boundless mercy, has not wiped out the sterner attributes of the judge.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 165 (see also *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 513).

Chap. iv., ver. 33.—"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus," etc.

THE Resurrection of Christ Historic.

The fact of the resurrection is a fact quite capable of proof. There is no difficulty in imagining it to have occurred. There are no invincible laws against it. All that can be averred is that it is not in the line of our usual experiences, but it is not a thing, in its nature, which any one would be unable to believe, if it were only substantiated by proper and sufficient evidence. The fact must be substantiated in the same way and according to the same principles of evidence which command belief in other spheres of human experience. Let us see, briefly, how the matter stands in these respects.

I. How many witnesses are there to this fact of the resurrection? One? Two? That might have been testimony much too feeble on which to hang so stupendous and unparalleled a fact. But the truth is that we have multitudinous and overwhelming testimony. We have the testimony of the four evangelists, and of James, Peter and Paul—to what? not only to what they themselves saw and heard, on which they speak distinctly, but to the fact that a great many others saw and heard with them, and there is no denial from any of these.

II. What character do the witnesses bear? Are they honest men? The answer to these questions needs to be but brief. Let any one read the Gospels and see what kind of men the writers are. True and simple and honest-hearted are they, if ever such men were in the world. Scepticism does not now fling against them the old rude charges of knavery and dishonesty.

III. Next, as to their soundness of mind. Where is there any sign of weakness or of hallucination in these Gospels, or in the Epistles, from first to last? It is impossible to conceive evidence more perfectly given.

IV. As to their opportunities for ascertaining the truth. They saw their risen Lord many times and in many places. They heard Him speak; they talked with Him; they touched Him.

V. Remember how their testimony was received, how undoubtingly it was accepted by men of their own generation. Remember the wonderful effects this belief produced; peace, and love, and joy in individual hearts, and new societies, and new nations in the world; and it has gone on, from age to age, producing the same results—think of this and of the other reasons adduced, and say if it be not legitimate to declare that the resurrection of Christ is the best authenticated fact in the history of the world.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 178.

REFERENCE: iv. 33.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 166; vol. xix., p. 126.

Chap. iv., ver. 36.—"The son of consolation."

BARNABAS is described as a "good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Goodness, the Holy Ghost, faith—these are the materials out of which sons of exhortation must be made if they would have the equivalent reading, "sons of consolation" registered against their names in the margin.

I. It is notable how Barnabas, after his great success at Antioch, goes to seek for Paul, and brings him there to join in the great harvest. No jealousy, you see, of St. Paul's superior gift. The son of consolation seems to have been absolutely free from all kinds of jealousy and envy; indeed, those people at Lystra were somehow impressed with his dignity and with his majestic bearing, for, though they valued Paul as the chief speaker, they identified Barnabas with Jupiter himself. The simple-minded, humble, unselfish man who perceives the great qualities of other men, and desires to turn those qualities to account for the glory of God, and who has no feeling of envy or jealousy in his own heart—this is the highest type of man; at least, I know of nothing better, grander, or more Divine. There is in reality something gentle and lovable in the character of Barnabas, as it shows itself in the passage in his

life, which seems open to criticism and blame. He quarrelled for a time, as we know, with St. Paul, and we may not positively say that he was right and Paul wrong; but certainly if Barnabas did err, it was because of his loving feeling towards one who was not unworthy of his love.

II. What Christian name could any one desire more distinctive, more honourable, more full of the spirit of the Gospel of Christ than "the son of consolation." Was it not as the son of consolation that the Son of God came down from heaven in the likeness of human flesh. And though to be a son of consolation is undoubtedly the supreme prerogative of the incarnate Son of God Himself, still in this as in other things, men redeemed by Christ and regenerated by the Holy Ghost, may follow at a distance and try to imitate their Lord. To preach glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to do those things which in the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus Christ declared that He had been appointed to do—who cannot follow Christ in doing acts at least something like these, and men who do these things are sons of consolation.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 369.

REFERENCES: iv. 36.—J. Baines, *Sermons*, p. 227. iv. 36, 37.—F. A. Warmington, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 120; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. iii., p. 139.

Chap. iv.

BEFORE the Council.

From this section of Apostolic history we may draw the following practical inferences:—

I. We may learn that if we are Christ's disciples we may expect to encounter antagonism.

II. That if we are really Christ's disciples, there will be something about us that will remind the world of Him. The inner springs of character may be hidden, but the life will make evident of what sort they are.

III. That if we are really Christ's disciples, the one rule of our lives will be to hearken unto God. The Christian's conscience takes its law from God, and no matter what will come, he will act upon its dictates.

IV. That if we are really Christ's disciples, our chosen fellowship will be with those who are already His.

V. That if we are really Christ's, we shall betake ourselves in every time of trial to the throne of grace.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Peter the Apostle*, p. 201.

REFERENCES: v. 1.—C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 184; v. 1, 2.—J. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 183; Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 397; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. vii., p. 262.

Chap. v., vers. 1-11.

FROM the conduct of Ananias and Sapphira we see:—

I. The vital difference between the spirit and the fashion of Christianity. (1) We may imitate Christ, yet not know Him after the Spirit. (2) We may mingle with Christians, and yet know nothing of the spiritual power of Christianity.

II. The fatal temptation to give the part as the whole.

III. The concealed sin, as well as the public iniquity will be followed by the judgment of God. (1) There is yet to be a reading of hearts. (2) Not only what we have done, but what we have left undone is to be judged. (3) Sins which apparently do no harm to society, are to be punished.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 124.

Chap. v., ver. 3.—"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" etc.

I. THE facts which are here related should lead us to rejoice with trembling. We are members of a Church which is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in that Church the Lord lives and operates with all the fulness of His power. Coming to that Church, we come in contact with a living force, with the breath of an Almighty Spirit, with a Divine inbreathing, which sweeps over the sensitive waters of the soul, either to freshen it to new life, or to involve it in the darkness and tumult of a destructive storm. But while this fact should teach us to be humble, let it rejoice us to know that this spirit, this Divine principle, is the secret of the Church's unassailable strength. It is by reason of this that the mightiest powers of the world have assailed the Church vainly from age to age. It were easy to throw down the walls of this magnificent temple; it were easy to raze to the earth all the noble and stately buildings which the self-denying faith of our forefathers raised to the glory of God; but it were impossible, not only to dry up, but even to reach the sacred Fountain of the Church's life. Nothing

can destroy the Church of Christ; nothing can touch her life; and when to such a purified and sanctified Church the armies of aliens are pressing in on every side, in the confident expectation that they have only to strike the death-blow, what shall they find?—an empty shrine in the despoiled and enshrouded tabernacle? Nay, but the intolerable glory of God, which shall burst forth like a destroying flame from the desecrated holy of holies.

II. Though this may be an encouraging thought to the Christian, it is naturally suggested to us that it would probably cause the worldly, the careless and unconverted to feel that it were best to get as far as possible out of reach of such a formidable power, as far as possible to ignore its existence. But can we? Can the most careless and hardened among us be altogether as the heathen? There is a worse punishment than the temporal death-stroke of Ananias; there is an eternal death, in which the stroke shall be apportioned, not according to a man's knowledge, but according to a man's privileges, not according to what he has known and believed, but according to what he might have known and believed, if he had used to the utmost of his power those privileges which were afforded to him. If then you would not be found out to your everlasting shame, come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 133.

REFERENCES: v. 1-11.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 205. v. 2.—*Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 216. v. 3.—Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 429. v. 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 32. v. 12-16.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 127. v. 12-42.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 577.

Chap. v., ver. 15.—**"They brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them."**

ST. PETER'S Shadow.

I. The first idea suggested by the text is that of a superstitious reliance of the multitude upon the person of St. Peter, operating as a charm upon those brought into juxtaposition with him. They had seen his word and his touch potent to relieve sickness and impart strength. These effects seemed to place St. Peter and all that appertained to him entirely above the commen world. They stayed not therefore to reflect and reason. They passed, in their unthinking enthusiasm, to an exaggerated estimate of the Apostle as the fountain head of health and life, from whom, as from the unconscious sun, radiated a virtue to

heal of his peculiar infirmity whosoever stepped within his shadow. It is not difficult to identify the error into which these people fell. They degraded God's grant of miracle to the Apostles, as responsible agents, into a magical influence seated in their bodies. That, however, which God saw to commend amid much worthy of rebuke, was the simple but intense faith which these persons manifested in the Divine power working amongst them. The early disciples, in the earnestness of their belief, sank into a superstitious notion of miraculous virtue attaching itself to unconscious things—a cloth, a shadow. We, in our slowness to look beyond the material universe, are in peril of denying the reality of a spiritual world intersecting at every point our own, of questioning the verity of all influences which we can neither calculate nor trace.

II. Note the manner in which God met this childlike faith of these primitive Christians. It is not distinctly stated that where the shadow of Peter fell sickness vanished and the hues of health returned; but the tone of the narrative implies as much. And, if so, then the miracle assumes a very peculiar character. God throws His power into the impotent sign which man has devised. These people fancied that the Apostle's shadow would be their cure; God meets them half-way and invests that shadow with an efficacy which in itself it had not, making it, to those who believed, the instrument of health and strength. Almighty love overflows the prescribed channels, and, in condescension to the creature's infirmity, heals him in his own way. It is not a knowledge of mysteries, but an intense childlike faith in Himself, as the Fountain of all good, that God prizes. There is no error of understanding which can hinder the outgoings of Divine compassion to those who, in whatever depth of ignorance, lift up their souls to Him.

BISHOP WOODFORD, *Sermons on Subjects from the New Testament*, p. 79.

WE all exert unconscious influence, and thus, even in our spheres of secular life, we affect one another. (1) Our voluntary efforts are only occasional and interrupted, while our unconscious energy is everywhere operative and constant. (2) Our constant and silent energy is most expressive of our real character, and therefore comes most into the sphere of what we call moral influence, which is always the most important. Consider this thought in its practical applications.

I. It should impress us with a sense of the importance of human life.

II. Even for the unconscious influence of such a life we are solemnly responsible.

III. Surely death does not destroy all the unconscious influence of human shadows.

C. WADSWORTH, *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 1.

REFERENCES: v. 15.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 61. *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 1. v. 17-32.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 190. v. 19, 20.—W. J. Henderson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 275. v. 20.—J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 50. v. 29.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 326. v. 31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1301; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 113; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 106; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 160. v. 31, 32.—J. Hall, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 270. v. 33-42.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 252.

Chap. v., ver. 34.—**"Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people."**

I. IN the New Testament, Gamaliel appears twice, and both times in the most interesting way. First, he is the teacher of St. Paul, and so we are constantly led to speculate as to what part of his great pupil's character is due to him; and in the second place, when the Apostles were arrested very soon after the Pentecost for preaching Christ in Jerusalem. Gamaliel, a member of the Sanhedrim, before which they were brought for trial, uttered a memorable plea for toleration and delay of judgment. In the light of all the facts about him, it is not hard to see what sort of a man Gamaliel was. He was a great teacher and a great preacher of toleration. The scholar of truth must trust truth; that is Gamaliel's ground. The man of mere affairs may be a bigot, but not the scholar; the student must claim for himself and for all men, liberty.

II. There are some men whose whole influence is to keep history open, so that whatever good thing is trying to get done in the world can get done; not the doers of great things, but the men who help to keep the world so truly poised that good forces shall have chance to work. These words of Gamaliel seem to point him out as being such a man. To him, evidently, surrounding all that man does—behind it and before it, and working through it—there is God. And with God are the final issues and destinies of things. Work as man will, he cannot make a plan succeed which God disowns; work as man will, he cannot make a plan fail which God approves. That is a noble and distinct faith. It is stepping across the line between fear and courage, between restlessness and peace, between intolerance

and charity, when a man thoroughly, heartily, enthusiastically, enters into that faith, when he comes to really believe that with all his heart and soul. These words of Gamaliel are the words of all really progressive spirits. The final glory of Gamaliel lies there. He believed that God was the only life of this world, that all who did not live in Him must die. We do not know whether Gamaliel became a Christian before he died, whether in this life he ever saw that the true light which these poor prisoners adored was true and gave himself to Christ. But at least we know that if we have rightly read his character and story, he made the Christian faith more possible for other men, and he must somewhere, sometime, if not here, then beyond, have come to the truth and to the Christ Himself.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Sermons in English Churches*, p. 243.

REFERENCES: v. 38.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 110; S. Macnaughton, *Real Religion and Real Life*, p. 309; C. P. Reichel, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 337; Phillips Brooks, *Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 279. v. 38, 39.—*Ibid.*, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 54; *Ibid.*, *The Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 397. v. 41, 42.—C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 204. v. 42.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 369; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 180; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 327; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 232; vol. xxviii., p. 357; v.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 285.

Chap. vi., vers. 1-8.

ON the Office of the Diaconate.

I. The origin of the office. (1) We are introduced here to a class of people called Grecians. They were proselytes to the Jewish worship, and Jews born and bred in foreign countries, whose language therefore was Greek. The home Jews or Hebrews looked down on the foreign Jews or Grecians as having contracted contamination by their long contact with the uncircumcised heathen. (2) The Grecians murmured. This disposition to grumble seriously threatened the well-being of the Church; it formed the gravest danger it had yet had to encounter. The Grecians complained that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. The diaconate was instituted when the temporal requirements of the Church urgently demanded it, and not a day before.

II. The duties of the office. (1) The seven men, according to the text, were elected to "serve." (2) They were elected to

"serve tables." Speaking broadly, this means that they were to attend to the temporalities of the Church. Their chief duty is to manage the finances of the kingdom, but that done to their own and others' satisfaction, they may extend the sphere of their usefulness, and assist in the furtherance of truth and goodness. (3) The deacons are to serve the tables of the ministers. One important object in the institution of the diaconate was to relieve the preachers of anxiety and distraction in the zealous pursuit of the work peculiar to themselves. (4) They are to serve the tables of the poor.

III. The qualifications for the office. (1) The first qualification is integrity. (2) Next comes piety, "Full of the Holy Ghost." (3) The third qualification is wisdom. Without wisdom, the deacon's administration will do incalculably more harm than good. What is wisdom? A right application of knowledge. But this implies two things. (1) That he possesses the knowledge to be applied; (2) that he possesses tact to apply his knowledge in the pursuit of his official duties.

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 114.

Chap. vi., vers. 1-6.

HELLENIST and Hebrew.

From the very day of Pentecost, the Jerusalem congregation had embraced a number of Hellenists, or foreign-trained Jews, though we have no means of knowing what proportion they bore to those born in Palestine, called by Luke "Hebrews." It is certain that their influence must have been out of proportion to their numbers. They were men of higher average intelligence and energy than the villagers of Judæa, or the small traders of the capital, and were not likely to acquiesce silently in any neglect which, from being in a minority, they might suffer at the hands of the home-born.

I. The creation of the office of deacon showed all the better that it did not mean to show anything, how unfettered the new kingdom of Christ is by external regulations; how full of self-regulating power, how unhierarchical, how free, how unlike great modern Church establishments; how like a great family of brothers dividing among themselves the work to be done.

II. Another thing which the act of that day did, and was recognised even at the time as doing, was to begin the severance between the spiritual and temporal work of the Church. It had become impossible any longer to continue the serving of tables with the ministry of the Word. That the work might be well

done, a division of labour was called for, and the Apostles could not hesitate which side of their double office they should abandon. To bear witness to the saving work of Jesus Christ is not a secondary or accidental function of the visible association we call the Church. It is its very end, its *raison d'être*, its one task, to which all else is a mere accessory. Still, it deserves to be remarked how carefully the new office and its duties were lifted out of the atmosphere of mere business into that of worship. The men eligible to office are to be full of the Holy Ghost as well as of wisdom. They are to be set apart to their work with equally solemn religious services, and symbolical acts of consecration, as if their work had nothing to do with serving tables. The earliest instinct of the Church was a perfectly true one, that no office in the kingdom of God can be discharged as it ought to be, no matter how exclusively external or secular it may appear, unless it be discharged by a spiritual man, and in a spiritual way. All the servants of the Church must be first servants of her Master, "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost."

J. OSWALD DYKES, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 207 (see also *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 641).

REFERENCES: vi. 1-7.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 1; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 311. vi. 2.—J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 309. vi. 5.—Bishop Simpson, *Sermons*, p. 159. vi. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 802; J. N. Norton, *Old Paths*, p. 292. vi. 8-10.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 41. vi. 8-15.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 12.

Chap. vi., vers. 11-15.

THE first Christian Martyr. Look:—

I. At Stephen as a man. The third verse gives us to understand that he was a man of "honest report:" literally, a man well testified of—the public bore him good witness. (1) This means that he was an honest man; and not only honest, but that he had a reputation for honesty. (2) But the words further imply that he was a good man. He was good, and he seemed good. A good character should be clear as glass, or, to use the Biblical illustration, transparent as light—a character men can not only look at, but look through, and see God behind and beyond.

II. Stephen as a Christian. (1) He was full of faith. (2) He was full of the Holy Ghost.

III. Stephen as a deacon. (1) He was full of grace. (2) Being thus full of grace, he was of necessity full of power. (3)

Moreover, he did great wonders and miracles among the people. For a while he is the most promising and interesting figure in Christian antiquity, and if we possessed his grace we should also inherit his power, and do great wonders, if not miracles, among the people.

IV. Stephen as a disputant. (1) They were not able to resist the wisdom with which he spake. (2) They were not able to resist the spirit by which he spake.

V. Stephen as a prisoner. His character as a prisoner is set forth in the eleventh and succeeding verses. His speech before his judges was remarkable: his bodily appearance was more remarkable still. They all, "looking steadfastly on him, beheld his face, as it had been the face of an angel."

VI. Stephen as a martyr. Nowhere outside the religion of the New Testament do we behold such majesty and meekness, in the grim presence of death. Pagans may die heroically, Christians only die forgivingly. Heathens may die bravely, believers in Christ only die Divinely. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 135.

REFERENCE: vi. 13.—E. G. Gibson, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 423.

Chap. vi., ver. 15.—**"And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on Him, saw His face as it had been the face of an angel."**

THE Angel-face on Man.

There are certain things common to the angel-face on man, amid all the endless variety of type and form—certain things which we may look for (with at least but little exception) on all the faces which carry on them any image, or resemblance to higher worlds, and holier creatures, and by the mention of these we shall make the subject quite practical.

I. Brightness. We cannot be wrong in supposing that there was something luminous in the face of Stephen, which was seen by those who looked steadfastly on him. We always associate brightness with the angels. If Stephen's countenance had been dull or sad on that day, this in the text had never been recorded of him.

II. Calmness. Stephen was preternaturally calm, and calm in a scene of the utmost excitement. And it is not enough to have a general cheerfulness as the result of a survey of life and the world on the whole. There must be superiority to particular disquietudes, and a keeping of the heart in the stillness of grace,

in the great and deep peace of God, in the very presence of any immediate agitations. No one can hope to get the angel-face who furrows and flushes his own with daily excitements, and yields without a struggle to particular temptations in the hope that a general obedience will get him through. The peace of God is to keep the heart and mind as a garrison is kept.

III. Benignity shone out in that wonderful arresting face; without this there could be no resemblance to God Himself, or to His dear Son. He that loveth not, is not of God, and cannot wear an angel-face.

IV. Fearlessness. If an angel were here, to live for a while the life of a man, you would see what it is to be brave. The celestial courage is attainable in terrestrial scenes, if not perfectly yet in large measure, and those who attain it will, by so much more, put on celestial resemblance, and look on human scenes, as it were, with the face of an angel.

V. He who would have the angel-face must look high and far. He must learn to look not so much *at* things, as through them, to see what is in them and what is beyond.

A. RALEIGH, *The Little Sanctuary*, p. 295.

THERE is a very awful power of rebuke entrusted by God to His chosen servants; and well may it fill us with awe that He has invested man, to such a degree, with his own attribute. Yet this history of St. Stephen furnishes us with limitations of its use, which are still more needful for us. For man, in his waywardness, often reverses the method of God; He is silent when He should rebuke in what concerns God's honour: rebukes when he should be silent, in what concerns his own.

I. They who rebuke should have the commission to rebuke. When we rebuke we speak in His name, and this we dare not presume of ourselves. Since rebuke is the voice of God correcting us, they who utter it should be themselves such as to hope that they speak that voice. We must listen to those in authority as our Lord bade to hearken to those who sat in Moses' seat, but they who speak must, that they sin not, speak the words of God and see that they mingle not their own.

II. Further, since rebuke is of so awful a character and inflicts suffering, it must be given, not without suffering to ourselves also who give it. We may not inflict pain without pain, suffering without suffering. It were to forget our common Master whose office we take; our common frailty, alike liable to be tempted and to need rebuke; it were to make ourselves as God, who

alone cannot suffer. It were rather to make ourselves like Satan, who alone torments without suffering, and is made to suffer, since of himself he will not.

III. We must reprove with humility. To reprove with humility we must reprove only those whom we have a right to reprove; not our elders; not those set over us; not those manifestly superior to ourselves. And to those who seem to be our equals, or who are in any way subject to us, we dare not assume any superiority, as though we were, on the whole, better than they.

IV. Lastly, we must reprove in love. We must not, as we are wont, measure the fault by the vexation it causes ourselves. Rather should we be tender, in proportion as the fault affects ourselves. Our one object should be to win, as we may, souls to Christ, and so we should reprove as may best win them.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*, vol. i., p. 75.

THE face of Stephen in this world we can never see. We can never read here its revelation of character. *Now* it is in perfect loveliness, like Him who is seen by His saints in His perfection. One day we may read—if we attain—that special message which God traced before the council in momentary beauty before it was hidden in a bloody grave. The vision of the martyr was a mighty message; but his lips threw that message into words. These words are in part at least recorded for our learning; and if we cannot see the face, the record we can read.

I. Note, first, that earnest desire for truth, which is the first real requisite to its attainment. St. Stephen had evidently desired truth, and searched and studied the Scriptures, and that eager and loving spirit had had its reward. One example of that reward is seen in the vigorous intellectual grasp of the subject, which he had to handle with readiness and under the appalling pressure of a trial for life. All the gifts of Stephen, his earnest desire for knowledge, his subtle dialectic, his noble eloquence, were turned full upon the subject of highest interest, upon the mysterious revelation of eternal truth.

II. There were higher endowments in the martyr than any mere attributes of mind. No mental vigour in such a desperate crisis would have availed to any purpose, unless it had been seconded by a boldness and intrepidity of spirit. Struggling for a cause, new, untried, and deemed altogether contemptible, he possessed his soul with a heroic patience, and bore his part with literally unexampled courage.

Note also his wealth of tenderness. The scene at the death of St. Stephen reminds us of the scene at the death of Christ; the words of prayer, which rose amid the hailstorm of cruel stones, ring through our souls with an effect of penetration, like that of the looks of the great Intercession, at the moment of the nailing to the cross. Do you ask the secret of such a combination of tenderness and courage in any tempted man? There is one answer: an unshaken, a deep, and supernatural union with Jesus Christ.

III. We all surely must, in our degree, hope to bear our testimony at all hazards to truth. Well then, let us note the conditions on which such fulfilment of our reason of life depends. (1) The soul must be true to itself. (2) In the world of revealed faith, all power of witness depends upon conviction. Act with courage upon conviction, and act with charity. (3) When all possible struggle is over we may witness to Jesus by the calmness of a loving resignation.

W. J. KNOX LITTLE, *Manchester Sermons*, p. 215.

THE First Martyr.

I. Religious persecution began with Christianity. This is a simple fact of history. Strange as it may seem, there is no record in earlier times, amid all the cruelty and reckless disregard of the sacredness of human life, which sullied the annals of the old world, of suffering and death deliberately inflicted on account of religious opinions. Martyrdom, in the strict sense of that word, was an unknown thing when Stephen stood up before the council. In him the terrible prophecy of his Lord began to be fulfilled. If he had failed in the trial, humanly speaking, Christianity would have failed. Had he relented under fear of stoning, the faith of the infant Church would have been shaken. On the other hand, Stephen's boldness—that calm, high bearing, that face irradiated as an angel's, rejoicing in danger and death for the Master's sake—rooted the Christian Church as a living power in the earth. The world and the Church had confronted each other. Did Stephen realise all this—that for a brief hour the world's destinies had rested with him? It may be so; hence, in the consciousness of that high calling, his face was seen as the face of an angel.

II. There is much to be noted in the Providence of God with regard to Stephen. The chapter before us dwells emphatically upon the singular power of his ministry. Yet this ministry, full of such mighty promise, was cut short at the very outset.

Was there, then, a waste of power in that early cutting short of the martyred deacon, in the midst of his days? Was it premature, that dying under the stony shower outside the gates of Jerusalem? Not so. It may well teach us two lessons. (1) The power of a short life. Who has not known instances of the sudden dropping into the grave of some gifted intellect, some character of more than common loveliness and promise? May it not be said that, like the Hebrew hero, such have been mightier in their death than in their life. The memory of Stephen may have been more to the Church of the Firstborn than Stephen's protracted ministry. (2) And there is a further teaching still. Was Stephen content to die at the beginning of his race? Then do we learn not to be impatient ourselves to behold a completed work; to be willing to lay the foundations, and leave to others to bring forth the top stone with joy; willing ourselves to sow the seed, and let other hands gather in the harvest.

BISHOP WOODFORD, *Sermons on Subjects from the New Testament*, p. 92.